

JOHN BULL

Vol. II. No. 32.

SATURDAY, JAN. 12th. 1907.

ONE PENNY.

[Registered at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper.]



*The world is a bundle of hay;
Mankind are the asses who pull;
Each tugs it a different way,
And the greatest of all is John Bull*

—BYRON.

Edited by
HORATIO BOTTOMLEY, M.P.

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JOHN BULL.

*Politics without Party—Criticism without Cant;
Without Fear or Favour—Rancour or Rant.*

Vol. II. No. 32.

Saturday, January 12th, 1907.

One Penny.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

The Offices of JOHN BULL have now been removed to 4. RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON, where, in future, ALL COMMUNICATIONS must be addressed, except in regard to advertisements (see notice below).

Letters must be addressed to the Editor, or the Publisher, according to whether they relate to Editorial or business matters.

All editorial inquiries MUST BE MADE BY LETTER.

All matter appearing in JOHN BULL, unless otherwise signed, is editorial.

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THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL

[The Editor discourses upon passing events and topics of the day.]

We do not wish to appear ungracious or to detract from the many merits of a deceased lady, but we think that the compliment of burial in Westminster Abbey is in danger of abuse. We had a great admiration for Sir Henry Irving, and we did not begrudge him his knighthood, but a sepulchre in the national mausoleum we did consider out of place. Nor should mere philanthropy be a passport to a peerage, or to the Abbey. Philanthropy only becomes noticeable when it is enforced by great riches, whereas it is really more admirable when discovered in the very poor. The last straw will be found when Mr. Carnegie's body is consigned to the resting-place of British statesmen and heroes.

Once again we have to call attention to the callous, brutal treatment of starving children by the Bumbles of our Imperial City, the richest in the world. A few days ago, a little seven-years'-old, ragged and shivering, was found by a policeman raking the gutters of Bishopsgate Street in search of food. He was without shoes or stockings, or cap. For pity's sake, a police constable took him to the workhouse, in order that he might subsequently charge the lad with wandering, and secure his welfare. The lad appeared in the dock at the Guildhall just as the constable had found him, and here is the dialogue:—

Alderman Alliston (with some heat): And would not the workhouse people put something on his feet before sending him through the streets?

P.C. Moppett: No, sir. They said I must bring him here just as I found him. As his feet were bare, I put him in a cab.

Mr. Savill (the Clerk): And you have paid the fare yourself?

The Constable: Yes, sir.

As our readers will remember, we addressed an open postcard to the City Guardians a few weeks ago on a similar instance of official brutality. Cases of the kind are constantly occurring; indeed, and the magistrates have made strong remarks in regard to them; but the City Guardians appear to have no bowels of compassion.

We do not know how far Mr. John Burns has power to compel the City Guardians to treat these starving, homeless, shivering mites of the City with some semblance of humanity, but, whatever power he has, we hope he will not hesitate to use. It seems almost incredible that there can be in London a body of men popularly elected as Guardians of the Poor who are so pitiless and brutal. Yet the facts, so often repeated, do not leave any room for doubt, and, to our mind, these Bumbles, and such as they, are quite unsuitable for the positions they occupy. While they remain, the story of yesterday will become the story of to-morrow and the day after, and the shame and the scandal will be shared by those who elect them.

Mr. Keir Hardie says he is a Socialist because Socialism realises and fulfils the conditions of the Sermon on,

the Mount. To a large extent this is true, for under a Socialistic system people would soon cease to take any "thought for the morrow," and would leave it to "take thought for the things of itself." In the meantime, Mr. Hardie might try to instil a bit of the Sermon—which is Socialism—into his suffragette friends. We do not refer to that portion which tells them to take no thought about their clothing—what they "shall put on"—but to those most timely directions as to their behaviour when arrested: "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." That is much better than hanging on to Bobby's beard—or to the rails of the ladies' gallery in the House of Commons.

The *Times of India* reproduces our recent article about Mr. Chamberlain's health—in its London letter; and not content with the wholesale piracy of our exclusive information—which it is "afraid is in all probability quite or nearly quite true"—thinks it a proper and graceful opportunity to say various sweet things about us. Who the London correspondent of the *Times of India* is we have no idea. But he is evidently a very sour old man. He says we are "a vastly different paper from the eminently respectable publication of the same name which I remember in the days of my boyhood." We are not much disturbed by this reflection—the new JOHN BULL is not a boys' paper, for either the first or second stage of childhood. Then we are told that our editor "is not of my acquaintance and will never be of it in this world." But what of the next world? It is notorious that all journalists go to the same place. Who knows but that we may some day occupy adjoining ovens?

We do not think that Borough Councils are best employed in considering abstract resolutions upon social questions which do not immediately concern them; but what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and the people who put forward the drink question and other extraneous matters in connection with the recent elections cannot complain if these subjects are introduced in a manner different from what they intended. For instance, Poplar has been discussing the evil effects of the bill to restrict the employment of barmaids. The general feeling was in favour of barmaids, but against the association of the debate with municipal business. One member aptly told a teetotal draper that a worse evil than drink was the tallyman; whilst another deserves a biscuit for saying that he went into public-houses sometimes "just to see the time."

Charged with causing an obstruction with his barrow on Sunday afternoon, Mr. Richard Snelgrove, costermonger, enquired what obstruction was—a point, indeed, in English law which nobody seems able to clear up. Certainly the magistrate has not mastered it, for his reply was, "Obstruction means stopping in one place when you are told to move on," which it certainly does not. The poor coster protested that he had simply stopped to serve a customer, "but, of course, I know it's six to four on the constable," he observed. Undaunted by the warning that he might be charged with gambling, he continued, exhibiting a finer wit than his judicial antagonist, "This constable is just such a clever man as the other one that left his 'point' when Butterfield was robbed. He missed the burglars when he was chivying costermongers, and that's all this one understands." To Mr. Cecil Chapman's hard and unsportsmanlike rejoinder, "Five shillings or five days," came the laconic answer, "Yes, I didn't reckon on anything else. Well, it's a five days' rest." Snelgrove had underrated the odds against him. It was the only slip he made.

Bazaars and entertainments, got up in a lavish style, on the pretext of helping some charitable institution, have been often exposed as an expensive and selfish method of raising money. But if the *Throne*, which ought to know, is to be believed, there has been a grave scandal lately. A bazaar on a very large scale was ap-

parently a success, but the financial result was disappointing. "It was a singular coincidence," says the *Throne*, "that sundry West-end dressmakers, whose aristocratic clients had been importunately dunned, shortly afterwards had their hearts rejoiced by the unexpected receipt of substantial cheques." Now if this means anything at all, it means that certain society people connected with the bazaar stole the money to pay their dressmakers' bills. Come, Mr. Editor of the *Throne*, where was the bazaar, and who were the ladies? If you don't like to print it, let us know.

Sir Walter Gilbey's recent letter to the *Times* on the subject of the New Betting Act shows that the Hon. Bart.—like most other people—has utterly failed to grasp the scope of that measure. Sir Walter advocates the introduction of the "pari mutuel," as he recognises that "to abolish betting on horse racing would be as impossible as to close the Stock Exchange," for "wagering is inherent in all classes of society." But when he goes on to say, "*The great danger of betting is doing so on credit*," he is only stating what we have all along pointed out. Everyone acquainted with the subject knows full well that practically the whole of the street bookmakers' business was a ready-money one, and one of the immediate results of this Act has been an enormous increase of betting on credit by people who would not wager to any such extent if they had to "plank down the ready" at every transaction. One of our readers suggests that our recent cartoon representing the House of Lords as the Old Man of the Sea should be followed by one depicting the Spoil Sport faddists on the shoulders of the Liberal Party. They will have to be got rid of—or the party is doomed.

It is comforting to know that the Lord Chancellor has a conscience. But there is this peculiarity about a Lord Chancellor's conscience, that it always works against the interests of the Liberal Party. When it is a Tory conscience it packs the magisterial benches with Tories, and when it is a Liberal conscience it always refrains from redressing the balance. True, the administration of justice should not be political. But Lord Loreburn's predecessor, Lord Halsbury, never had any scruples in rewarding party services by appointments to the borough and county magistracy, and it is not a desirable thing while politics play so big a part in men's lives that the magisterial bench in many parts of the country should be the monopoly of any one party.

We remember that Lord Loreburn is a judicial officer as well as a politician, appointed to his high place as a result of the party system of the spoils to the victors. He raised no objection to it in his own case. When, however, he is urged by an influentially-signed memorial to readjust the party balance on borough and county benches in the interests of impartial justice, he raises all sorts of objections. He seems to think that a Tory Lord-Lieutenant is more likely to be impartial than Liberal M.P.'s anxious to recognise the political claims of their friends. So, apparently, a Liberal Lord Chancellor is going to keep the magistracy in the hands of Tories, all Tories being naturally impartial, and all Liberals, with the exception of Lord Loreburn himself, being suspect. Such is the difference between "Bob" Reid, politician, on the look out for a party reward, and Lord Loreburn, Chancellor, having got it.

While we are on this subject of the Lord Chancellor's conscience, by-the-way, it may be as well to point out that the political lawyer is the keenest and most persistent of all applicants when it comes to the distribution of loaves and fishes. Look round for a moment and count the number of lawyers who have owed their high positions to the party machine. When the pot of patronage is boiling the Parliamentary lawyers are the first to cluster round it with hungry mouths and tremendous spoons. If they cannot get the Woolsack, or

a puisne judgeship, they will take a Recordership, a county court judgeship, or any other plum. They are rewarded more often than not beyond their personal deserts. Yet it is a fact that the House of Commons does not like lawyers, and that most lawyers, whatever they may get out of it, are a failure in it. The truth is, a political lawyer's sincerity is always suspected, and in the House, unless a man not only has sincerity, but has the gift of convincing others that he has it, he talks to the four winds.

Dr. Aked has at last consented to accept the "call" —from Mr. Rockefeller—in spite of "the tender and sacred ties which have bound him to Pembroke Church, Liverpool for sixteen years." We could, however, have allayed the anxiety of those "influential American citizens," who, according to the *Daily News*, have been "bombarding him with cablegrams fearing English influences would be too strong to let him go to the United States." As we stated a fortnight ago, we should have liked to wager on the result, and we rather fancy that if we had had the opportunity of underwriting the rev. gentleman's safe and sound delivery to Mr. Rockefeller, the *Daily News* staff (as underwriting is not betting) would not have been averse to join us in the speculation.

At any rate, he has decided to leave the vineyard at Liverpool, and go into the vineyard of the Rockefeller, at New York, where the blessed reward is understood to be something between the salary of a Groom of the Stole and the wages of an ambassador. Dr. Aked will have the felicity of preaching every Sunday unto John D. Rockefeller and other persons who have laid up much treasure on earth, and no doubt he will comfort them with the assurance that it is easier for the rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than to go through the eye of a needle. Apparently Dr. Aked has not been able to resist the spiritual call to console these poor, lonely, mammon-worshippers in their stress and travail. And certainly if he can make all cosy for John D. in this world and the next he will not only earn his salary, but should in addition receive a handsome personal present from that hard-shell metallurgist at least every merry Christmas.

Mr. Asquith is getting nearer and nearer his grand chance. Though more than one or two of the astral prophets read in the stars an unpopular Budget, we decline to believe that anybody on earth, having a sound mind in a sound body, can possibly produce an unpopular Budget with the surplus which Mr. Asquith will have at his disposal. If he fail in this chance, it is difficult to hope he will ever succeed. He has had a death-harvest of millionaires. His estimated revenue for the twelve months current was £142,755,000. But though only nine months of the financial year are gone, he is already nearly £3,000,000 better off than his estimate. Of this sum, however, £1,500,999 comes from dead millionaires. Such are the facts to date, and if Mr. Asquith does not prove himself a creative financier, and at the same time materially lighten the heavy burden of taxation, he will not be a sweetheart of ours.

The death of Lady Clancarty disposes of the hope that the claims made for Dr. Doyen's cancer treatment were well founded. Even in France, it may be said that none of the famous doctor's professional brethren have ever had much faith in it, while in England the specialists have sorrowfully to admit that as yet science stands baffled before this terrible disease. Lady Clancarty was twice under the treatment of Dr. Doyen, and twice sent home as cured; but the end was in the beginning, and the beginning was death. The Cancer Research Fund in England ought never to need either an advocate or a beggar. The capable men who are investigating the phenomena in England are testing every

claim and exhausting every test with unwearied patience, and they should be sustained and encouraged in their work by the practical sympathy of the nation.

Though China is not in our jurisdiction we feel bound to take note of the fact that Confucius has been raised by order of the Emperor to the same rank as Heaven and Earth, which His Most High and Most Extraordinary Majesty alone worships. Whether Confucius feels honoured or not by this elevation in rank we are not able to judge, but it is safe to say that most other people who have been as dead for so many thousands of years would treat it with the most profound indifference. It seems about as superfluous as conferring a knighthood on Julius Caesar.

A youth of some parts was in the habit of going among his elders and making what he considered were wise observations. For his pains he was cuffed and called a conceited youngster. So he went away and bought himself a jet-black beard. Again he went among his elders and made the same observations. And the report spread that a wise stranger had come into the land. Then the boy took off his beard, and they drove him away. Moral:—Do not be deceived by the weakling in whiskers.

John Bull's Biscuits.

AWARD No. 157.

For publishing the following choice lines:—

"O'er Burns wept Scotland with annual pang,
But would not save the sacred stones he sang."

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY
TAKES THE BISCUIT.

AWARD No. 158.

For advertising "all the latest 2d. glossy actresses always in stock,"

M. E. WARD, OF KING'S LYNN,
TAKES THE BISCUIT.

AWARD No. 159.

For giving, on a Tuesday, a graphic report of a wedding which did not take place till Wednesday.

THE CHESHIRE DAILY ECHO
TAKES THE BISCUIT.

AWARD No. 160.

For stating that crèches have been established at all prisons where more than 50 babies at "the mother's" breast are admitted in one year.

THE HOME SECRETARY
TAKES THE BISCUIT.

AWARD No. 161.

For succeeding in shocking the modesty of the Court of Saxony,

MADAME CALVE
TAKES THE BISCUIT.

AWARD No. 162.

For knocking her husband down, hitting him about the head with a porcelain vase, and then summoning him for assault,

MRS. JAMES MCCARTHY, OF ISLINGTON,
TAKES THE BISCUIT.

AWARD No. 163.

For stating that they always demand the object of lady visitors to the House of Commons, "except when they come in evening dress,"

THE POLICE AUTHORITIES
TAKE THE BISCUIT.

AWARD No. 164.

For formally "discharging" a man whose case had been adjourned, and who had died during the adjournment,

THE BOLTON MAGISTRATES
TAKE THE BISCUIT.

THE GERMANS TO THE FRONT.

BY AN ENGLISH RESIDENT IN NORTH GERMANY.

The most popular picture in the German Navy is Roechling's "The Germans to the Front." It represents that Navy's tradition—its solitary tradition.

Admiral Seymour's attempt to reach Peking from Tientsin is forgotten nowadays. But the little composite force of 2,000 men contained 460 Germans as well as 915 British, and on its retreat to join (on the 26th June, 1900) the allied force sent to its relief, the Germans were ordered to the front on the 22nd June. They took their turn, that is all. Yet there is no sailor in the German Navy but believes that that order was given in the most desperate circumstances and at once saved the day. From that tradition and picture Ernst Mayer could write in his pamphlet, "Los von England," of Seymour's "cry for help, 'The Germans to the Front.'" And so copies of Roechling's picture, from a large and well-executed oleograph at a shilling, to fine proof prints, are to be seen everywhere in the streets of Wilhelmshaven and . . . On the left stands Admiral Seymour with arm upraised, giving the order, and his exhausted men lying at his feet. In the centre are the Germans rushing forward with a cheer, that heterogeneous jumble of black stripes and Maltese crosses—the German naval flag—being brandished in front, and the men of other nations applauding wildly in the background. The picture and the lie alike accurately represent German feeling towards our men.

The expedition lost 27 British killed and twelve Germans. Quite a sufficient commentary. In the "History of the German Navy" there was at that time in the appendix a list of the officers and cadets who had lost their lives in the service. The list was a curious one. It occupied a page and a half. It began with the name of Kapt-leutnant Niesemann, who fell at Tres Forcas on the 20th August, 1852, and the rest consisted entirely of the names of those drowned in the foundering or wrecking of the schooner "Frauenlob" in 1860, the corvette "Amazone" in 1861, the battleship "Grosser Kurfurst" in 1878, and the corvette "Augusta" in 1885. That was all. No wonder the Germans have been hard put to it to invent legends of their Navy.

One frequently hears nowadays that the Germans show great lack of reticence in their aims. This may be with regard to their ultimate ends, but it is not so with regard to their immediate objects.

Where then should we now look for the immediate German objective? The answer is very simple, and it is to be found in the North Sea. Holland first and Antwerp afterwards are destined to fall into the Prusso-German maw. With the Dutch and the great Belgian port in their hands, their dream of maritime supremacy would become a reality, and Pitt's saying as he tossed the map aside, "There is no more a Europe," would become a stern truth. So far back as 1780 von Riesbeck wrote that if Germany were but united and had the Dutch and Belgian ports in her hands, she would "give laws to Europe," and would become such a naval power that "no country could then cope with her." Those were the days of admiration of England, but the thought took root and has grown since. Is it to be with Holland as it was with Denmark? A great deal of attention is being devoted in France to this subject, and it may be as well to consider what Germany is doing. We must look at the North Sea, and not the Baltic; and at Wilhelmshaven, not Kiel.

It is not too much to say that work at the former port has been going on for years with feverish activity, none the less because one hears nothing about it. The Wilhelmshaven and Oldenburg papers should be studied rather than the Berlin ones if one would know what is doing. Two large new harbours are in process of completion, and a large tract of foreshore on the Jade-Busen has been acquired preparatory for others. Barracks and workshops are rising all round the existing harbours like mushrooms. Every few months sees

some great building completed. In six months I counted five—including barracks. The new ship canal project that has not yet leaked out is that from Wilhelmshaven to Emden. Side by side with this will come the development of the Dollart bay. The railway station at Emden last year was completed at a cost of 3,675,000 marks, so that preparation is going on there also.

The history of the German Navy is the history of their North Sea coast, not the Baltic; though it is true that the German official histories commence with the story of Benjamin Raule—a Dutch pirate hired for four months by the Elector Frederick William for the sum of 135,000 florins—who did excellent business for Brandenburg by capturing Swedish vessels. In 1848 we commence with the North Sea. The creation of a German Navy was decreed by the "Bund." Boxes were placed in all the public-houses with the inscription: "For the German fleet." Lotteries were organised. Girls embroidered slippers, and poets wrote verses. Willy speculators in Hamburg profited by the occasion by selling two old paddle-wheel steamboats. Some shapeless boats of unseasoned wood were built and mis-called gunboats. Finally, a large battleship, called the "Deutschland," was constructed. But, alas! its career was not glorious: it fought nothing but the North Sea waves, and was of so doubtful solidity and stability that it was sold by auction.

But in 1853 a serious start was made. The district now occupied by Wilhelmshaven was ceded to Prussia by Oldenburg for 500,000 thalers. At the commencement, the site was nothing but a few fishermen's huts standing on marshy land and protected by dykes from the muddy sea. Work commenced on the harbour in 1858. The following year there was a hurricane, and the workshops were flooded and destroyed. Marsh fever laid the workmen low, and there was great want of drinking water. Nevertheless, everything was recommenced, and work has gone on ever since with unflagging activity. By 1869 eleven and a half million thalers had been spent on the harbour. The expenditure since must have been enormous—but the amounts do not appear in the German naval estimates.

During the war of 1870-1871 the fleet hid itself at Wilhelmshaven behind a triple row of torpedoes, and under the protection of the land batteries, and the French fleet cruised impotently outside the islet of Wangeroog. Even at that date all German coast stations were linked together by telegraph, and a landing rendered practically impossible. Up to about 1874 the principal German battleships were built in England. After that date the lesson had been learnt, and no more were needed. It was on the occasion of the launch at Poplar in that year of the German battleship "Kaiser"—a formidable ship (for those days) of 7,400 tons—that Count Munster, with the customary delicate Prussian tact, remarked, at the subsequent lunch, that it was a success which "gave Germany the preponderance over all other nations."

And so, with the history of the "mailed fist" and the legend of Admiral Seymour's "cry for help," the first stage of the German Navy closed, and a new one, commencing with the North Sea incident, opened. What was the cause of the whole Russian fleet suddenly opening fire? Admirals and men do not all agree that they saw such an unmistakable thing as a torpedo-boat for no real cause. Why was there such alarm at Berlin all that winter, and why were all the German ships kept with banked fires, officers sleeping on board, and all leave recalled? It may have been merely a coincidence, but an old torpedo-boat—the "S. 6"—was shortly afterwards to be seen in the little fishermen's harbour at Wilhelmshaven riddled with the shot of small guns. We have obligations towards Belgium. What obligations have we towards Holland? What will our Government do if a German princelet is forced on the Dutch? Queen Wilhelmina is likely to leave no heir. Is it to be, then, "the Germans to the front" in sober truth?

II.—RURAL HOUSING.

In which it is shown how "may" will have to change to "must" if migration from country to town is to be checked.

One of the great difficulties in the way of properly housing the rural population is the cost, and cost must depend in considerable degree upon the price that is to be paid for borrowed money. Even if land owners could put up cottages at a price that would enable them to make a reasonable interest out of the rent payable by the cottagers, many would not be willing to build, but many probably might be induced to build if it were possible to erect at a profit. If the State were really anxious to see the rural population properly housed, it would render available monies at a low rate of interest, and from time to time Parliament has taken steps in this direction, and authorised loans at cheap rates. Unfortunately, as with so much of our legislation, the Housing Enactments have been permissive instead of compulsory, with the usual result of not being acted upon. Over a period of fifty years the Commissioners responsible for these advances have not advanced an average of £50,000 a year for housing, including loans to public authorities, whilst the amount advanced on the security of property has been less than an average of £10,000 a year, or, allowing £250 per house, only fifty cottages per annum have been built by public loan. Having regard to the demand all over the country for cottages, this is a ludicrous result. Let it be noted, too, that whilst the Prudential Assurance Company were able to offer to the Linton Rural District Council, on the security of the rates, a loan of £15,000, at 3½ per cent. for 60 years, the Loans Commissioners' terms were 4½ per cent. for 50 years.

Surely the sound principle is that laid down by the Royal Commission on Housing, in 1885, where they say:—

"The general principle they would lay down is that the State should lend at the lowest possible rate without loss to the National Exchequer, and that in making the necessary calculations ancient leases should not be brought into account."

Mr. Torrens proposed that half the annual balance from the Savings' Bank Fund should be lent for housing purposes, at a rate equal to 2½ per cent., plus the charge for administration and sinking fund, and Mr. Jesse Collings wrote:—

"The Charity Commissioners have in their charge large sums of money, much of which has been obtained by the selling of land belonging to charities in rural districts. It would be appropriate if the Commissioners were directed to loan this money (at the rate of interest they are at present getting) to rural local authorities on the security of lands purchased and of the rates."

But it is not enough to facilitate construction of cottages. There will never be the necessary new construction unless machinery is created for bringing the need to the notice of the Local Authorities, and pressure upon these authorities to do their duty in the matter. Now, as matters stand, the local authority not wishing to know is not compelled to know. It is the duty of the medical officer of health to notify the Council when it appears to him that a house is unfit for human habitation, and any four householders may make a complaint to him in order to compel the Council to enforce the provisions of the Act. But, so far as the householders are concerned, they are not at all likely to make the representation; they do not take enough interest in the matter, and as for the medical officer, he will not make it frequently, or with insistence, when he knows that it is not welcomed by the authority to whom he owes his position. The first thing to be done, if the law as to rural housing is to be a living law, is to appoint a medical officer, or medical officers, of health, and a sufficient number of sanitary inspectors, for the purpose of carrying the statutes into execution. These officers will have to be properly qualified, and give the whole of their time to the duties of their office, which they would hold during good behaviour, removal being impossible without the consent of the Local Govern-

ment Board. In this way the independence of the reporting officers would be secured, and, until it is secured, their inspections, where they have hostile authorities to deal with, will continue perfunctory, and their representations inadequate.

It is the hostility of the local authority that largely accounts for so little being done in rural housing. The authority will not move, and, as matters stand, cannot be made to move. When the annual report of a local medical officer of health to the Local Government Board reveals the continuance of an unsatisfactory state of affairs, the Local Government Board communicate with the Council, who usually reply that they are doing all they can. Where the case seems manifestly bad, one of the Board's medical inspectors is instructed to visit the district and report on its sanitary condition. But that is all that can be done. The Local Government Board, as the law now stands, can only inspect. They have no power to see that the defects pointed out are remedied, or the recommendations of their inspectors carried out. We are glad to find that the select committee, whose report we have been considering, recommend that statutory right of complaint to the Local Government Board of default of the county council should be given to every rural district council, parish council, or parish meeting, or to any four householders. The Local Government Board would then hold an enquiry, and make an order enforceable by mandamus; or, in the alternative, the Local Government Board would be empowered to appoint a person or persons to execute such order, the consequent expense to be recoverable from the county council.

We are a little surprised at the opinion of the committee that no serious hindrance to rural building has been caused by undue rigidity of the bye-laws, but it is admitted that these bye-laws have imposed conditions occasioning unnecessary expense. Recently there has been some modification of this, and further modifications might, we think, be made with advantage. Another point, and a much more important one, is the need for large gardens attached to cottages. The committee collected abundant evidence to show that the difficulty of rent would be largely diminished by the addition of ground to the cottage. The cottagers could pay higher rent, and would be glad to do so, if land or pasture were attached to the dwellings.

Migration to the towns is largely due to the monotonous existence and lack of prospect held out to the younger generation under the present system. This migration can best be checked by giving greater facilities for the renting or purchase of sufficient land to afford a profitable career to those who remain in the country. What can be done may be proved in those districts where facilities, though only to a partial extent, have been given for obtaining land for small holdings. Frequent instances are to be found of men gradually improving their condition in life by profitable working of small pieces of land. Such examples are an incentive to others in the district to remain at home and start in the same career. Allotments are now fairly universal, and they have been of great advantage to the rural population, but oftener than not they are far away from the man's home, and the land is the poorest in the parish. Give the labourer a well-built cottage, with a decent plot of garden ground attached, and there would soon be a revolution in the appearance of the country-side.

It may be hoped that the recommendations of the committee will be considered in the next session of Parliament, and that a Bill resting on their recommendations, or even more drastic and courageous, will be supported by the whole strength of the Government.

IN THE CITY.

THE JUNIOR ARMY AND NAVY STORES.

The time is approaching when the accounts of this Association for the past year will be submitted, and it is to be hoped they will show that the very disturbing state of things that existed a year ago has been modified in the direction of improvement. It will be remembered that the last report, which appeared in March, 1906, showed that the business was not in a healthy condition, and the dividend was reduced to 5 per cent., which was not earned. In 1904 shares to the nominal value of £35,000 were issued at a premium of 7s. 6d. per £1 share. To-day these shares can be bought at from 12s. to 15s., but there is no sale.

We have received several letters from shareholders in this concern, asking us as to the position to-day compared with what it was when the general meeting of last year was held, and wanting to know whether the same dividend distribution is likely to be paid this year, and whether, as last year, it will have to be declared, if it be declared at all, out of accumulated profits. We regret to say that our information is very unfavourable. We have reason to believe that highly unsatisfactory as was the state of things disclosed at the general meeting of last year, the position has worsened since then. Nor do we see any likelihood of radical improvement until there has been drastic change in the management. The place is over-staffed, at any rate, in the higher departments. The managing director, Mr. E. P. Clench, is paid a very high salary for the duties he performs. We should be amongst the last to cavil at generous remuneration. We believe in the American system, which assumes that a really good man can hardly be overpaid. But then the condition attached to these American salaries is that those who get them shall be in the very first rank of efficiency. Now we have nothing to say against Mr. Clench personally. We do not doubt that he duly performs his responsible duties to the best of his ability, but he holds his office by virtue of heredity, of being his father's son, and with no disrespect to him, it may well be asked whether he is quite strong enough for the position in which he finds himself. Then there are seven estimable old gentlemen who, with the Managing Director, form the Board. They are for the most part military men who can know nothing whatever about the efficient conduct of such a business as that which is carried on by the Junior Army and Navy Stores. We see the result in the cost of the management. A gross profit of £108,000 odd, and just on £58,000 paid away in directors' fees, salaries, and wages. The whole place wants reorganising. The costly ornamental Board requires to be replaced by plain business men, drawing moderate fees, or taking a moderate percentage of actual net profits. And much of the room that is now given to luxurious and spacious offices for members of the staff should be thrown into the general business premises, and so lessen the congestion from which they suffer at the present time.

It may be said that we might have reserved our comments upon this business until the issue of the report, when we should have trustworthy data as to the year's working to go upon. But, as a matter of fact, we have data which, although not open to the public, is perfectly trustworthy, and in the next place we noticed last month one of those editorial advertisements with which the *Times* has made the public so familiar, and which on this occasion appears in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in the "Special Column," as it is called, of its City page, under date of December 11. In this article, published in leader type, the writer speaks of what he calls the "continued and increasing patronage of these Stores—particularly noticeable in the case of the Junior Army and Navy Stores," by which he must be taken to mean that during the past year the trade of the Junior Army and Navy Stores has increased rapidly, a statement without foundation in fact. The writer goes on to observe that "an erroneous impression prevails that only personages of rank are allowed to obtain goods at this establishment." Where such an erroneous impression is to be found we do not know. To assert that "only personages of rank," not even "only 'persons' of rank," can be served at the Junior Army and Navy Stores, is too ridiculous to need denial, and shows how

sadly the writer requires a little coaching by the more artistic puffers of the *Times*. But with a responsible newspaper like the *Pall Mall Gazette* publishing laudatory effusions of the kind, intended, as it may be presumed, to persuade the public that the Stores are in a highly prosperous condition, and that the purchase of the shares at their present price would represent an excellent investment, it is desirable not to wait for the publication of the report in March, but to say at once that, far from the business of the Junior Army and Navy Stores showing great improvement, the Company has, in fact, done considerably worse in the past year than in that of which the Chairman had to give so gloomy an account when last he met the general body of shareholders.

THE STANDARD LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY.

MORE CORRESPONDENCE.

Another policy-holder in the above Company has sent us copy of correspondence he has had with the management. Our correspondent contends, as other correspondents have contended, that the Company have no right to appropriate monies which admittedly have been earned for another purpose. The holders of with-profit policies are entitled to certain benefits, but apparently the Company have appropriated these profits to help to establish the security not only of the with-profit policy-holders, but non-participating policy-holders, and also the shareholders. Our correspondent wrote:—

"At the time I was induced to sign a proposal form for a policy in your Company, it was represented to me by your then inspector that there in all probability would not be a very good bonus to be declared in 1900, but that was owing to there being some loss by the Society on the Indian currency; but the next profit declared, namely 1903, would be a considerable increase on the previous one, and that I could always expect to have a good profit declared at the end of each investigation. According to my policy, and the premium I pay, I am entitled to participate in the profits of the Company, and for this purpose pay an increased premium. You have admitted making these profits, and I am clearly entitled to share in them; but, notwithstanding that, you devote these profits for the purpose of improving the funds of the Society, not only to the holders of policies who pay to participate in the profits, but to the other policy holders and shareholders."

This letter is dated November 16, 1906, and on the 20th of the same month the General Secretary replies. In the course of his letter he writes:—

"The adoption of the basis, which was only ascertained since the previous investigation, was inevitable, and it was surely a wise and prudent course to value the securities on a strict basis, and to strengthen the company's position in other respects. Having done this, the directors announced that there was no balance available for payment of bonuses."

On November 23 our correspondent replies, and in the course of his letter says:—

"Firstly, your agent distinctly made certain representations to me, by reason of which I was induced to take out the above policy. Such representations I have now discovered were false. Secondly, by your own report, and by your letter to me, your company have made certain profits in which I am entitled to share by reason of my paying an increased rate of premium for this benefit. These profits have been appropriated towards other purposes which, I allege, is entirely illegal."

Under date November 26, the General Secretary replies:—

It is hardly fair to characterise the agent's representations as false. From the previous results he may have anticipated that there would be a bonus in 1903; but it is impossible to predict with certainty the profits of a Life Assurance Company.

I think you will agree with me that the main objects to be obtained in a large assurance institution are security and stability, and I repeat that, having adopted this wise and prudent course to which I have referred, the directors look forward with hopefulness to the future."

Our correspondent tells us he should be glad to correspond with any policy-holders with a view to taking some concerted action in fighting a test case on the point. "I am sure any letters forwarded to you on the matter you will be good enough to send to me."

Yes, we shall be very pleased to send any such letters. It may be mentioned in this connection that a meeting will be held at Mr. Maurice Jack's offices, 6, Old Jewry, E.C., on Monday, January 21, at 2.30, for the purpose of submitting counsel's opinion as to points arising out of the non-declaration of a bonus to policy-holders for the five years ended 1905, and other material information, to participating policy holders.

THE "MAGPIE" TO THE RESCUE.

All of us—by which we mean about one-hundredth part of 1 per cent. of the adult male population of the country—have been congratulating ourselves upon the easier conditions of the Money Market and the better outlook, but how many know that we owe these good things to our old friend, "Magpie," of the *Sunday Times*? Yet so it is. We have it on his own authority, and what authority could be higher? Writing in the *Sunday Times*, he says:

"The clear statement of the exact position which appeared last Sunday in this column was cabled to the States, and has materially helped to decide the policy of the New York financiers."

If only "Magpie" had consented to advise before Christmas, instead of after! Here were these poor New York financiers in a financial maze, from which they could see no outlet, and which was threatening all sorts of world-wide disasters, when suddenly the way out was made plain to them. The

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The Subscription List will open on Tuesday, 8th January, and will close on or before Friday, 11th January, 1907.

MEXICAN NATIONAL PACKING CO.

(Incorporated under the Laws of the State of New Jersey, U.S.A.)
Operating under special Concessions from the Supreme Government of the Republic of Mexico, and subject to its direct official inspection.

CAPITAL.	
Authorized Common Stock	\$10,000,000
Issued and Outstanding	\$7,500,000
Five per Cent. Forty-Year First Mortgage Gold Bonds authorised	\$2,000,000
The above Bonds are appropriated as follows:—	
1. For funding and retiring the outstanding Six per Cent. Bonds of the Company	\$700,000
2. Present issue	1,300,000

MARTIN'S BANK, LIMITED, are authorised by the purchasers referred to below and the Company to receive applications for

1,300,000 dols. of the above 5 per cent.

First Mortgage Convertible Gold Bonds.

Each Allottee of Bonds will receive from the Company, when he has paid up in full, a Bonus of \$20 (twenty per cent.) in fully-paid Common Stock for every \$100 par value of Bonds allotted to him.

Payment in full may be made on allotment or on the due dates of any subsequent instalments, under discount at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum.

A FULL COUPON WILL BE PAYABLE ON 1st JULY, 1907.

Of the above issue \$1,010,000 of Bonds are offered for sale on behalf of persons who have agreed to purchase the same from the Company, the remaining \$290,000 being offered for subscription on behalf of the Company.

Out of the total \$2,000,000 of Bonds, \$700,000 have been appropriated to retire \$800,000 6 per Cent. Bonds of the Company, of which about four-fifths have already been retired. The sums received by the Company from the purchasers of the \$1,010,000 of Bonds, and the net proceeds of the \$290,000 of Bonds now offered for sale on behalf of the Company, are required to pay certain liabilities of the Company, and to provide for:—

1. Installing the machinery in packing-house No. 1 at Uruapan, Michoacan.
2. Building and equipping packing-house No. 2 in the State of Vera Cruz.
3. Building and equipping packing house No. 3 in the State of Nuevo Leon.
4. Purchasing and putting in service fifty refrigerating cars.
5. Building and equipping cold storage warehouse, refrigerating plant, and general offices in the City of Mexico.

The balance estimated by the President of the Company at nearly \$400,000 (\$28,063 6s. 8d.) will be available for the general purposes of the Company.

The Bonds are secured by a Trust Deed in favour of the Knickerbocker Trust Company of New York, whereby the Bonds are constituted a first charge upon the lands, concessions, water rights, property, and franchises of the Company, present and future, situated in the Republic of Mexico, subject only to the above issue of 6 per Cent. Bonds which are to be retired.

The said Trust Deed provides for the redemption of the Bonds over a period of forty years, by means of a Cumulative Sinking Fund (commencing 1st January, 1913), which is to be applied in redeeming the Bonds, either by purchase at or under 105 per cent., or by drawings at 105 per cent., liberty being reserved to the Company to redeem the whole or any part of the Bonds outstanding, at any time, at a premium of 10 per cent. upon six months' notice.

The Bonds will be to Bearer, but may be registered at the Office of the Knickerbocker Trust Company, New York, or at the Office of the Prudential Deposit Trust, Limited, in London. Coupons for interest will be attached to the Bonds, whether registered or to Bearer, and will be payable half-yearly, on 1st July and 1st January, in New York or London.

The Bonds will be issued in sums of \$1,000 (£205 6s. 8d.) and \$100 (£20 10s. 8d.), and allotments will only be made in multiples of these sums. The Bondholders will have the option of converting their Bonds at any time into Common Stock, at the rate of \$110 par value of Common Stock for each \$100 par value of Bonds.

Principal and interest will be payable at the Office of the Knickerbocker Trust Company in New York in U.S. gold coin of the present standard weight and fineness, or at the Financial Agency of the Company in London, at the fixed rate of exchange of four shillings, one penny farthing to the dollar, fractions of one penny being disregarded.

Definitive Bonds will be delivered on the 9th June, 1907, in exchange for scrip certificates to Bearer, which will be issued in exchange for allotment letters with Bankers' receipts for payments made on application and allotment.

Attention is called to the enclosed statement of facts with reference to the Company and its prospects, made by Mr. John W. De Kay, the President of the Company, and to the letter from the Hon. Sebastian Camacho, President of the National Bank of Mexico and Vice-President of the Federal Senate of the Republic of Mexico, upon which this prospectus is based. Mr. De Kay, it will be noticed, estimates that the profits from the first packing house already constructed of rock and brick, should for the year 1907 amount to \$869,505 gold (£178,429 13s. 6d.), and that when the Vera Cruz and the Nuevo Leon Plants are completed, which the Company intends to construct in the year 1907, the total profits should exceed \$1,300,000 gold (£260,375).

The estimated profit of the Uruapan Packing House alone amounts to	\$869,505 = 178,429 13 6
To pay the 5 per cent. interest on the 2,000,000 dollar Bonds will require	100,000 = 20,520 10 0
LEAVING A BALANCE OF	769,505 = 157,909 13 6

for reserve, redemption, dividends on common stock, etc.

The Company has made arrangements with the London Central Markets Cold Storage Co., Limited, Smithfield, and the Imperial Food Supplies, Limited, 17, Snow Hill, and the General Produce Company, Limited, West Smithfield, London, under which it will enjoy the benefit of the established facilities afforded by these companies for the distribution of its products in London and other of the chief cities of Great Britain.

The Government of Mexico has granted to this Company until April 10th, 1913, rebate to a large extent of the slaughtering taxes now prevailing, and under its Concessions the Company will pay as follows:—

Upon cattle, 5 cents per head, instead of \$2.35 gold per head, the present average.

On hogs, 3 cents gold per head, instead of 90 cents gold per head.
Upon sheep, no tax, instead of 25 cents gold per head.

The Federal slaughter taxes at present paid to the City of Mexico alone amount approximately to \$400,000 gold (\$28,063 6s. 8d.) annually. The tax saving to the Company on this basis should be sufficient to pay the interest on the entire Bond issue of this Company of \$2,000,000 three times over. Moreover, in conjunction with the other benefits conferred, the rebate of taxes should be the means of ensuring to the Company the dominant control of a large percentage of the meat business of Mexico.

The concessions and rights of the Company in Mexico have been vouched for by the Honourable Luis Mendez and the Honourable Francisco Alfaro, two of the leading lawyers in Mexico, and the organisation of the Company and the trust deed and the validity of the present issue of Bonds, and the legal status of the Company generally have been examined and vouched for by the Honourable Charles W. Dayton, Judge of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, and by Mr. Lafayette H. De Friesse and the Honourable D. A. Holmes, of the New York Bar.

Holders of Bonds, who so desire, can register their names and addresses with the London Advisory Board, at the offices of the Prudential Deposit Trust, Limited, 16 and 17, Broad Street Avenue, London, E.C., in order that periodical statements may be sent to them of the position and progress of the Company.

Applications for Bonds should be made upon the form accompanying this Prospectus, and forwarded to the Bankers, with a cheque for the amount payable on application. If no allotment is made the deposit will be returned in full, and when the number of bonds allotted is less than that applied for the surplus will be credited in reduction of the amount payable on allotment. Failure to pay any instalment when due will render previous payments liable to forfeiture and the allotment liable to cancellation.

Application will be made in due course to the Committee of the London Stock Exchange for a settlement in and quotation of the Bonds.

The official statistics as to live stock in Mexico and copies of the concessions issued by the Federal Government of Mexico are filed at the CONSULATE of the UNITED STATES OF MEXICO, Broad Street House, New Broad Street, London, E.C., where they can be seen by intending applicants.

Certified copies of the Company's Concessions and of the trust deed securing the Bonds can be seen by intending applicants at the offices of the Company's Solicitors, Messrs. LINKLATER AND CO., 3, Bond Court, Walbrook, London, E.C., between the hours of 11 and 4, while the list remains open.

A Brokerage of 1 per cent. will be paid on the amount of Bonds applied for and allotted on applications identified as coming through Brokers and Agents.

Prospectuses and forms of application can be obtained from MARTIN'S BANK, LIMITED, and its branches, and from Messrs. BILLET, CAMPBELL and GREENFELL, 3, Throgmorton Avenue, E.C., and from MESSRS. EMBERTON AND HUGHES, 4, Draper's Gardens, E.C.

Dated January 8th, 1907.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

- JOHN W. DE KAY New York.
PRESIDENT MEXICAN NATIONAL PACKING COMPANY.
- HON. SEBASTIAN CAMACHO Mexico City.
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- HON. JULIO M. LIMANTOUR Mexico City.
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- HON. CARLOS LANDA Y ESCANDON Mexico City.
- HON. LUIS MENDEZ Mexico City.
PRESIDENT OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT RAILWAY COMPANY.
- HON. FRANCISCO ALFARO Mexico City.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND MEMBER OF CITY COUNCIL OF MEXICO CITY.
- HON. SKRAPTON FERNANDEZ Mexico City.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS, AND LEADING SLAUGHTERER AND DEALER IN MEATS IN MEXICO.
- HON. J. P. URIARTE Mexico City.
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- HON. CHAS. W. DAYTON New York.
JUDGE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.
- HON. DELAVAN A. HOLMES New York.
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- H. P. CHESLEY Mexican City.
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- A. F. McDONALD Pittsburg, Pa.
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- GEO. B. LUPER New York.
VICE-PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER SECURITY TRUST AND LIFE INSURANCE CO.; LATE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE OF PENNSYLVANIA.
- SAMUEL H. BUCK Mexico City.
COMPTROLLER MEXICAN NATIONAL PACKING COMPANY.
- T. K. SCOTT New York.
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- FRANK H. HALL Chicago.
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SECRETARY THE CORPORATION TRUST COMPANY.
- DR. JOHN W. HANCHER Mount Pleasant, Iowa.
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- LONDON ADVISORY BOARD.
- SIR WILLIAM F. HAYNES SMITH, K.C.M.G., Chairman Egyptian Lands and General Trust, Ltd.
- SIR WILLIAM WISEMAN, Bart., London Manager Imperial Food Supplies, Ltd.
- HON. ADOLFO BULLE, Consul of the United States of Mexico for London and its Dependencies.
- JOSEPH MOORE, Esq., Chairman London Central Markets Cold Storage Company, Ltd.
- *LAFAYETTE H. DE FRIESE, Director Borax Consolidated, Ltd.
- The purchasers of the Bonds will nominate two additional members of the London Advisory Board after Allotment.
- *Interested in the issue as Vendor of some of the Bonds and otherwise.
- TRUSTEES FOR BONDHOLDERS UNDER THE MORTGAGE.
KNICKERBOCKER TRUST COMPANY, New York.
- TELEGRAMS for Prospectuses, "PRUDENTIAL," London.

"Magpie" had indicated what should be done, and the situation was saved. How true it is that the world knows little of its greatest men.

BRITISH WESTINGHOUSE.

Our criticisms of Westinghouse finance are fully justified by the seventh annual report of the British member of the group, which for the year ended with July last records a profit of £7,630 on a total share and debenture capitalisation of £4,500,000. After payment of debenture interest, absorbing £52,375, and other adjustments requiring £42,790, the debit balance brought forward from last year is increased from £15,407 to £102,942. The directors, as a last resource, recommend a drastic capital reduction scheme by which no less than £1,375,000 is to be wiped out. Part of the capital it is proposed to extinguish is in the preference shares, which represent hard cash subscribed by the British investor, and part in ordinary shares, which are in their entirety the paper promoters profit secured by American financiers. That the capital should be reduced we fully agree, but the whole of the ordinary capital should be cleared away before the genuine preference shares are interfered with. We have no doubt that the holders of the latter will make their voice heard at the meeting on January 14th.

THE STORM CENTRE.

Germany is the storm centre—at present in a monetary aspect, later on possibly in a political. The latest return of the Bank of Germany shows that the note circulation is no less than £28,632,000 above the legal maximum, whereas a year ago it was only 17¼ millions above the limit, and two years ago the maximum was only exceeded by 8¼ millions. The German Government is in the throes of an electoral struggle which may mark an epoch in the country's history, and needs money badly. Unable to place a big loan she is financing from hand to mouth by means of Treasury bills. A crisis is approaching. Whether as a last desperate resource the Kaiser and his Court will endeavour to create international difficulties to cover their own is the question of the New Year.

We have to acknowledge receipt of a copy of the fifth annual edition of the "Investors' Blue Book." It contains a mass of information respecting Joint Stock Companies, mostly checked by their secretaries. We recommend it to the many who do not want the larger and costlier manuals.

NEW ISSUES.

The Mexican National Packing Company, which is making an issue of \$1,300,000 (for particulars see advertisement on another page), Five per Cent. First Mortgage Convertible Gold Bonds, should have a prosperous career before it. This country is becoming increasingly dependent upon the foreigner for meat, and Mexico is in a position to add substantially to our supplies. The Mexican National Packing Company has valuable concessions, and has been launched under very influential auspices.

Attention is directed to the Nerchinsk Options, Limited, which offers 40,000 shares, of £1 each, of a capital of £50,000. Particulars are given on another page.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

THE EASTIAN METER COMPANY.—A SHAREHOLDER (London).—We are obliged by the papers you send us. It is the old story of hopeful inventor and credulous public.

ACCIDENT POLICY.—In our last issue we published a letter from "J. S. (New Southgate)" referring to accident policies. Since then a well-informed correspondent has written us in reply to J. S., and many of our readers will, we think, thank us for publishing his letter.

Referring to your correspondent J. S.'s complaint regarding his apparent inability to prefer a claim under a railway accident coupon guaranteed by a certain accident company, because he is also the holder of an accident policy with the same office, I would suggest that he can easily overcome this difficulty by effecting his accident insurance with one of the offices who leave coupon insurance out of their sphere of operation, such as the Union Assurance Society of Cornhill. He must, of course, appreciate that an office which issues both ordinary accident policies and also guarantees coupons has to protect itself against the risk of an undue loss in any individual case. Your advice to insurers against accidents should be to select an office that does not guarantee coupon insurances.

THE BRITISH UNITED INSURANCE CORPORATION, LIMITED.—W. J. S. (Plymouth).—We should prefer another selection.

ASSURANCE POLICY.—A CONSTANT READER (Goodmayes).—You cannot do better than go to the Hand in Hand in New Bridge Street.

PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION OF LONDON.—H. F. A. (Brixton Hill).—We do not think you could sell until the bond has got a surrender value, which does not occur until you have been paying for five years.

INVESTMENT OF MONIES.—F. J. H. (Whitley Bay).—We think your list of investments an excellent one, with perhaps the exception of No. 5. We should advise the purchase of Ordinary shares.

AMERICAN COMPANY.—F. G. (Oheapside).—You say that your mother, "a widow of limited means," has bought a number of shares in "an American concern for constructing a tunnel through a mountain in Colorado," and you want to know if this is a good investment for a person in her position. Without claiming to have any knowledge of the company that is constructing a tunnel through a mountain in the United States, it is pretty safe to say that your mother could hardly have made a more unfortunate choice, and our opinion is not greatly modified by learning from you that "Mr. Vidler—who apparently is the promoter of the Company—is a Christian Socialist, and she belongs to the same sect."

STANDARD OF COMPANY.—W. H. W. (Stockport).—B. O. (Finsbury Park).—We believe the concern to be deserving of support, but we do not think its financial standing very strong. By this we must not be taken to mean that we do not think it is able to meet its obligations.

SUNDAY INVESTMENTS.—STRENGTH (Bath).—(1) We should sell for what they will fetch, the whole of the South African mining shares you name, with the possible exception of No. 2. We observe that you, or rather those, who bequeathed these shares to you, bought Chartered at 51. In our judgment they would be very dear at par, and we see little likelihood of their getting up again much beyond their present price, whilst ultimately they are bound to go much below par. (2) With the money got from the sale we should invest in the shares mentioned by you, which at their present price not only give a very exceptional return, but have large reserves to fall back upon. (3) The Universal Stock Exchange, of Waterloo Place, is financially strong.

SCOTTISH UNION AND NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY.—POLICY 59,072 (Morecambe).—We have considered the correspondence you send us between yourself and the above-named company, but we cannot see that the company is to blame in the matter, otherwise we should not hesitate to publish the correspondence, or a digest of it. You say that in 1896 you took out a policy for £250 on the life of your husband, and paid the premium for that year and the three following years, which amounted in all to £58 2s. 6d., but after that, and for reasons beyond your control, you allowed the policy to lapse. Apparently you made no communication to the company until the 23rd October, 1904, when you addressed a letter to the Directors, in which you requested them to revive the policy upon terms which, to say the least, were very favourable to you. In his reply of the 23rd idem, the secretary wrote: "Seeing that the policy lapsed as far back as August, 1896, and two valuations have since been made with the distribution of the ascertained surplus, there is no fund out of which to pay the value," and further letters from the office in reply to yours confirmed the decision. We cannot agree that you had any cause of complaint. As the manager puts it in his letter of the 8th November, "the policy lapsed by non-payment of the premium, and inasmuch as it was not sent to us for endorsement in terms of Clause IV., the Directors could not do anything to keep the assurance, in force."

AMALGAMATED PRESS, LIMITED.—H. J. F. (Basingstoke).—(1) At the present quotation, and upon the basis of the last dividend declared, the return would be practically as stated in our last issue. (2) Thorneycroft Ordinary are not likely to move much just now, but we look to see them somewhat higher later on.

LOYD'S BANK SHARES.—A WORKING MAN (Birmingham).—(1) Bank shares are not suitable for your purposes. (2) You would run no risk in dealing with the Pearl Insurance Company.

VALUE OF SHARES.—W. G. (Kelso).—The shares are of no value. Never risk money in American mining concerns.

LIFE AND HEALTH ASSURANCE ASSOCIATION.—W. H. H. (Stone).—Of course not. The two concerns are of widely different standing. We are largely in agreement with the opinion you send us. The "amount of funds" at the end of 1905 was only £3,186, and this, apart from its paid-up capital, is all that the company had to set against its large liabilities.

INVESTMENT OF £200.—PAVE (Hammersmith).—We think you had better let it remain in the Savings' Bank until it has grown somewhat larger. The advantage in the way of higher interest from anything in which you could put it would be very small, and where it is it is safe. Write us again when the balance has grown a little.

WESLEYAN AND GENERAL ASSURANCE COMPANY.—J. E. F. (Shepherd's Bush).—Yes, "a perfectly sound and good company" for your purpose.

MINING SHARES.—F. S. (Olecolan Post Office, O.R.O.).—We think you had much better keep your money in your pocket. These shares have no value.

LONDON CITY AND MIDLAND BANK.—J. F. W. (Shoreditch).—We see no reason why you should not open an account as suggested with the bank.

GEORGE NEWNES, LIMITED.—L. W. (Walton-on-Thames).—The company did not do well last year, having incurred serious loss in connection with a new venture. The refusal of the Chairman to give particulars to which shareholders were entitled created uneasiness which might have been avoided if there had been greater candour. The Chairman was confident that the dividend would be better again for the current year, and it may be so; but we do not think there is likelihood of substantial rise in the quotation at present.

AMERICAN OIL COMPANIES.—T. E. J. (Weston-Super-Mare).—We regret that we can give you no reassuring information respecting the company into which you exchanged. There is great risk in putting money into any of these American companies.

STRATTON'S.—HOPKINS (Liverpool).—Very speculative.

THE CHROMO-EMBOSING SYNDICATE, LIMITED.—A. E. S. (Maida Vale).—There is no Stock Exchange quotation for these shares, and we have no very late information as to the position of the company.

DEPOSIT OF £100.—A. N. (Stroud Green).—We do not think there would be any risk in the suggested deposit, but you would do well to read this answer in connection with our earlier replies upon the same subject.

LEGAL AND GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY.—WIGWAM (Newcastle-on-Tyne).—No. The Legal and General is an office of high standing; indeed, it is one of the strongest and most enterprising, and very attractive to new entrants. Taking an Endowment Assurance with Profits, and comparing it with the other company you name, the total value of the policy at maturity available for £10 annual premium, plus bonuses, at same rate declared at last valuation, age next birthday 50, policy maturing at 50, would be £235 as against £275 of the other company.

LOW PRICED SHARES.—E. W. (Liverpool).—You say you have "been dabbling a little in shares with the London and Paris Exchange, and consequently lost money, they recommending shares which were worthless," and you want us to advise how to "buy a few shares to the extent of not more than £5 outlay that you may recoup your loss." If you buy these shares you are more likely to add your £5 to your loss than recoup it. You should keep your money in the Savings Bank.

MUTUAL LIFE OF NEW YORK.—A READER FROM NO. 1 (Brighton).—The offer open to you from the North British was in our mind when we advised you, and we see no reason to alter the advice then given.

OUTSIDE BROKERS.—UNFORTUNATE (Dulwich).—We know nothing to their discredit.

MANAGEMENT OF £4,000.—STREATHAM (Crouch Hill).—You want our opinion as to how you have invested £4,000 to bring in £100, with a capital appreciation over all of £300, and an addition of about £10 on investment realised. Assuming your shares are in sound companies, and we understand them to be in insurance companies and home industrial shares, we think you have done excellently. There is, of course, the liability of uncalled capital, but that you seem to have reckoned with, and to think too remote an obligation to be taken into serious account.

SMITH'S STAMPING, LIMITED.—WOMBOONE (Wolverhampton).—We have no information respecting this company.

BRITISH HOMES ASSURANCE CORPORATION.—SECRETARY.—We are obliged by your letter of the 26th ult., informing us that you have arrived at a satisfactory settlement with the policy holder to whose case we directed your attention. We wish to add, as we have informed the policy holder, that in our judgment you have taken a generous course in the matter.

PEOPLE'S BANKS.

Persons interested in the subject of People's Banks should send a Post-card to

MR. THOMAS FARROW,

29, New Bridge Street, London, E.C., for a free copy of his new and instructive publication,

"THE POST OFFICE DEPOSITOR,"

or, THE DISCOURAGEMENT OF THRIFT A Case for People's Banks."

III.—HUMAN DOCUMENTS.

A wet, misty morning at Notting Hill. A shuffler at the corner of the "Antelope," collar of seedy coat turned up, brim of greasy hat turned down, a face the result of a permanent Soap Trust, hands in pockets, bleary eyes, seeking nothing, half-opened, as a motor whirled by. It shows the state of dejection the Bleary one indulged in when a new-comer bumped against him, and he never even grumbled nor sought an apology, only hitched his eyes a trifle wider.

"Good lor', what's up?" ejaculated our Bleary.

"Not much," says the newcomer, smug in an overcoat, respectable as to washed face and whites of eyes, evidently on a higher plane than his submerged vis-à-vis—"not much. D'yer feel like a toothful of rum?"

"Good lor'! Feel like it—not 'arf!" and Bleary drew one hand out of his pocket to serve as a *mouchoir* (probably not cognisant of that action, but thereby assuring himself he was awake and a drink toward).

The fussy, important benefactor got to the bar first, the only other patron being a white-haired old woman, wet, with wet skirts, upon a wet floor.

"Two rums 'ot—better 'ot, eh?" Bleary said nothing, only nodded, waiting to see if the Benefactor was really going to pay—in cash. It was true—the barman handed twopence back out of the sixpence tendered.

Our overcoated acquaintance drained his glass, hot and all. Bleary sipped; Bleary wanted to make this blessing last as long as possible.

"Go on, finish it," says Benefactor. "Two more 'goes.'" The barman put down the glasses. "Let's get near the fire," and drawing up a form the peer and the peri sat down.

"Go' lumme! What's coming off? Where did you pinch it?" at last ventured Bleary.

"Pinch! What d'yer mean. I'm not on the make-haste. I've just come out—been a debtor, my boy—done a month for two quid. Yus, a debtor." The Benefactor puffed out his overcoat near the top buttons, conscious that neither of his two hearers was ever likely to aspire to such an honour.

"Yus," Benefactor continued, "I pitched a yarn to old Carter—'im as 'as the shop corner Soper Road—tells 'im goin' to work always in next week; ses missus too ill to come 'erself, and run up matter of two quid; then 'e finds me out, and gives me away. I gets a month, and e' gets nuffin'."

"Old Carter went to the 'ouse last week," volunteered the old woman.

"Can't 'elp 'is troubles," cheerily went on Benefactor. "Yer knows what weather we've 'ad outside; it were a comfort to be inside. Only thing I dreaded was the barf. Fust day I got there they showed it me. Ugh! But, there, ye're bound to have some little worries, and the water was 'ot, and I lived thro' it, and did not mind it so much the second time. Bless ye, yer might get ter like a barf in time. One of the screws says to me, says he, 'Ere, my lad, take these warm things and put yer own away till yer month is up—yer'll save 'em that way.' I took 'is tip, and was warm and comfortable right through, which my own togs were thin."

"What abart the work?" put in Bleary, poking a filthy finger in an insinuating way into an equally filthy pipe.

"Work," airily answered Benefactor, "never saw or 'eard of any. 'Ere, see that lame kid on the doorstep? Well, 'e'd easily do all anyone 'ad to do—even a lag's hard labour 'e'd do, easy; and as to a debtor—well the fust day they gimme some coir to pick—we don't even see oakum—and the next day the screw puts a needle and things and a piece of canvas into my place, and says, 'Do your best, and don't hurry, as I cannot show you how to do it yet, and if ye spoil it don't matter; we throw it away with others.' All you do is to keep quiet, and not go routing round for work; ye've always got a book to read, better than you can get at the lib'ry, and yer not chased away either, and can sleep over it much as you like, and yer needn't think about the postman bringing yer summonses nor anything at all to worry you."

"Sounds alright, if they didn't starve yer," broke in Bleary, tilting his glass in vain effort to discover some remaining dregs.

"Starve," contemptuously rejoined the Benefactor. "You ought to talk, you did; you get so many 'ot meals and so much beef and soops and ceterer that you would turn up yer pimply nose at anything but chicken. Garn, you ought to talk. Are you ever sure of a meal? What have you had for breakfast? What's yer choice for dinner? Dining at the Sissil? Look 'ere, I 'ad 'ot tea and bread every morning and 'ot coker and bread in the evening, and 'ot meat, soup, duff, and pertaters every day, good bed—nothing lively in it—blankets, and clean sheets—sheets, mind yer (looking round in a truculent attitude at the feeble

old drab behind him as if expecting a demurrer). The wind could blow and the rain could pour, we didn't care. If it were wet we didn't want the wet, do you? If it were dry, we had an 'our in the mornin' and an 'our in the afternoon to stroll round a yard together arm in arm, talking 'ow we liked, and from arter breakfast till just before supper our doors were open. What more do you want?

"Ere, gi'e us two more—say three this time," he broke off. "I pitched the tale to the chaplain, and he gives me a dollar this mornin' along with the ticket everybody gets for free breakfast, and here I am. Pay rent? Never! Pay anybody anything? Not I; I'll watch it."

"Sixpence, please," said the potboy, handing over three tots. "Twon't do to let you run an account, or we'll follow old Carter."

Benefactor paid, and ran out to catch a 'bus to take him to an overworked wife, struggling along, with only one hope, and that a certain one.

Bleary held his glass to the light, musingly—he was asking himself where on earth he could find some softy to let him have money or goods.

THE WASHERWOMAN'S PLAINT.

(AFTER EDGAR A. POE.)

Once upon a day so dreary, as I leaned all sad and weary

O'er a tub of dirty linen standing on the wash-house floor;

While my soap I was un-wrapping, suddenly there came a tapping

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my wash-house door.

"'Tis the greengrocer," I muttered, "tapping at my wash-house door."

"Only this and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter

In there stepped a time-worn parrot of the distant days of yore.

Not the least obeisance made he; not a moment stopped or stayed he;

But with foul intent and shady, perched above my wash-house door,

Perched upon a bar of Primrose on the shelf above the door.

Perched and sat, and nothing more.

Then this gaudy bird beguiling, my sad fancy into smiling

By the grave and stern decorum of the long, long face it wore.

"Tho' thy looks are nice and civil, thou," I said, "are bent on evil,

Foolish, grim and ancient devil from the far Pearsonian shore,

What is it you wish to tell me?" Then that fearful bird of yore

Said, "Your soap will cost you more!"

Then I took me up a duster, getting in a nasty fluster, Went bald-headed for that parrot perched above my wash-house door.

And I chased him round the kitchen, ever pitchin', ever pitchin',

The utensils of the kitchen at that bird upon the floor, Till I killed that silly bird which, as it wallowed in its gore,

Said, "Your soap will cost you more!"

F. W. THOMAS.

ONLY 363 MORE DAYS.

WITTY-CUR'S ALMANACK.

Price SIXPENCE, Nett. By Post, EIGHTPENCE.

Edited by JIM CROW, Esq.

PAYING OUT BRIGGS.

BY PHIL HEMYNG.

Mr. Pringle, the sole representative of Pringle and Co., produce merchants, of Mincing Lane, was a grey man, with grey eyes, grey hair, grey whiskers, grey complexion; and, judging by the successful manner in which he had amassed a large fortune, with plenty of grey matter in his brain.

"Molyneux," he remarked to his cashier one morning, "you don't look well. What's the matter with you?"

"I'm quite well, sir, thank you," replied the young man, a good-looking fellow of about twenty-five, who would have appeared more at home on the "footer" field than in an office.

"You're not in debt, I hope?" This with a sniff of suspicion.

"Oh, no, sir; I don't owe a pound in the world," answered Molyneux.

"What is it, then—are you in love?" The old gentleman's keen eyes noticed the colour mounting in the young man's face, and he chuckled, and "washed his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water," as he continued:

"Ah! that's it, I can see. Why don't you marry her then? I believe in young men marrying, it keeps them steady, and you are earning enough to support a wife if she isn't extravagant."

"Oh, yes, sir; besides, I have sufficient put away in the Post Office to furnish a house with."

"Why don't you marry, then?" persisted Pringle. "Won't she have you?"

"It isn't that, sir," replied Molyneux, and he grew still redder as he spoke. "But the fact is, her father's very rich, and he would never allow her to marry a poor man."

"Stuff and rubbish," ejaculated his employer. "You're not a poor man; besides, your prospects are excellent. Who is the father? Do I know him?"

"Yes, sir, he's in our line," hesitated the other. "But I would rather not mention his name, because—"

"I know! I know! You needn't say any more," interrupted the merchant, his grey eyebrows nearly meeting in his excitement.

"It's old Briggs! I remember seeing you with his girl up the river one afternoon last summer."

"Really, sir," stammered Molyneux, looking more confused than ever. "You must forgive me—"

"Don't say another word. I consider that it is most—er—abominable for two—er—er loving hearts to be parted through the disgusting mercenariness of a close-fisted old curmudgeon like Briggs, and if you choose to take my advice, I shall be very glad to help you in any way that I can."

"We shall be only too pleased, I'm sure, sir," responded the young man gratefully.

"Well, then, if I were in your position, and the girl loved me well enough, I'd get a licence on the quiet, take her out to some church in the suburbs, and marry her without saying a word until it was all over."

"Would you indeed, sir?"

"Yes, I would; and if you're man enough to do it, I'll give you a cheque for a hundred pounds, which will pay for the licence and the honeymoon."

"Really, Mr. Pringle, you're so kind that I feel—"

"Not at all, not at all," interrupted the old man. "Naturally, I take an interest in you, and er—er—besides, that, you see I want to pay out Briggs."

"Pay out Briggs?"

"Yes, he did me a nasty turn about a month ago—a dirty, underhand trick, I call it, which resulted in a loss of over two thousand pounds, and I swore then that I'd pay him out the first chance I got, and now I can kill two birds with the same stone—do you a service and get even with old Briggs at the same time."

"You don't think that it will be dishonourable on my part, sir?" inquired Molyneux anxiously.

"No, my boy, certainly not; all's fair in love and war, you know," answered Mr. Pringle. "Now I suppose you'll see the girl this evening, and when you do, you sound her, and if she consents, I'll arrange for you to have a fortnight's holiday. Eh, what?"

"Well, if you advise me to do it, I will."

"Of course, I do; you're a decent young fellow, and I'm sure no man need be ashamed of having you for a son-in-law; and it will teach that over-reaching old sinner that hearts are not to be played with like card counters."

"But suppose he should cut up rough, sir?" queried the young man.

"What can he do when you are married, and the girl's

your wife? He'll be glad enough to forgive you, take my word for it."

The following morning after Pringle had disposed of his correspondence, he found Molyneux waiting to speak to him.

"Well, young man—well?"

"That's all right, sir; she has consented."

"That's good," and the old gentleman beamed g'cefully as he thought of his rival's coming discomfiture.

"She didn't like the idea at first, but when I told her that you advised us to take the step, and had assured me that there was no harm in it, she gave way."

"Ah! she's a sensible girl that."

"She said that she had often heard her father speak of you in the highest terms—"

"The old hypocrite! he did me out of two thousand pounds."

"And that it couldn't be wrong," continued the young man, "if you said that it was all right."

"By Jove! she's a level-headed girl that; you'll have to introduce me after you're married."

"Very pleased, sir; in fact, the young lady said that she should like to see you to thank you for your kindness."

"So she shall, so she shall, and look here, Molyneux, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll lend you my motor-car to run away in. Eh? What? That will be up-to-date, won't it?"

"Really, sir, you're too kind. We thought we would like to be married next week, if you didn't mind."

"Next week? Let me see—oh, yes, that'll do. Of course, you'll get all your work as forward as you can, because when you come back I shall be away from the office a good bit for a few weeks."

"Going abroad, sir?"

"Oh, no; but an old school-fellow of mine, Mr. Schenks, is coming to stay with me for a while; as a matter of fact, though I haven't mentioned it to anyone yet, he's coming over to marry my daughter Vera."

"To—marry—your—daughter—?"

"Yes, and a very excellent match it will be, too; he's managing director of the famous Blue Clay Mines, near Johannesburg, and he must be worth a couple of millions if he's worth a ha'penny. Think of that, my boy! Two millions of pounds!"

"A terrible lot of money to be responsible for, sir—"

"Not a bit of it; but that reminds me, where's my cheque-book? I'll give you what I promised you while I think of it, and you can go to Doctors' Commons and see about your licence."

He seated himself at his desk, and filled in a cheque, which he handed to the young man, saying:

"I've made it out for a hundred and fifty, the extra fifty is a wedding present for the girl, and you can tell her that after it is all over I'll use my influence with her father to get her forgiven. That'll touch the old scoundrel up on a tender place, I think."

Molyneux obtained the licence and made arrangements to be married at Hampstead, and as they would pass through London after the ceremony on their way to Brighton, where the honeymoon was to be spent, he suggested that he should take advantage of the opportunity to introduce his newly-made wife.

The day arrived, and the old gentleman was reading the latest Stock Exchange quotation of the Blue Clay Mine, and congratulating himself upon the capital husband he had secured for his only child, when he heard the sound of an automobile pulling up outside.

This changed the current of his thoughts, and he smiled grimly as he thought how cleverly he had paid out his enemy and how the latter would regret having bested him in that never-to-be-forgotten business transaction. The smile was still on his lips as Molyneux entered the room followed by a lady in motor veil and mask.

"My dear young man," exclaimed Pringle, grasping the other's outstretched hand as he spoke, "allow me to congratulate you on the step you have taken. And now introduce me to your wife."

Molyneux led the girl up to the old gentleman, and removing her mask and veil, discovered the features of his own daughter!

"What!" he exclaimed. "You, Vera! What does this mean?"

"All's fair in love and war, dad," answered the girl.

"We only followed your advice, sir," said Molyneux.

"Hearts are not to be played with, like card counters, dad," observed Vera.

"You said yourself, sir, that nobody need be ashamed to have me for a son-in-law," remarked the young man.

"Forgive us, dad," pleaded the girl.

Then the old gentleman turned away. It was very hard for him, he was meeting the greatest disappointment of his life, and he felt it acutely.

"You promised you would use your influence with her father to obtain her forgiveness," urged Molyneux.

"I couldn't help it, dad," murmured Vera; "I've been so lonely, and I did want someone to love me so badly."

Slowly her father changed his position, and faced the young people, and speaking quietly and deliberately, observed:

"What's done can't be undone. I suppose I've brought this on myself to a certain extent, but if I have, I have had to pay for it, and how bitterly nobody will ever know. However, I am willing to forgive you young people on one condition, and that is that you solemnly promise never to mention to a living soul how I paid out Briggs."

They promised.

FOR JOHN BULL'S WOMENFOLK.

By MRS. BULL.

[Mrs. Bull will be pleased to receive, from her women readers, suggestions and contributions for this page.]

OVERWORKED CHILDREN.

A great deal of discussion has been going on as to the wisdom or otherwise of giving school children home preparation. The system is denounced as cramming, as productive of evil consequences in regard to health, and a fruitful source of weakened eyesight. A "British Mother" writes that "home is fast becoming a sort of lodging, where our children sleep, eat, and bury themselves in their lesson-books till bed-time." Another parent, complaining of the tax on the young of home preparation, says that the home lessons have sometimes engaged her little girl from six until ten o'clock at night. An over-dose of lessons is worse than too much play. After a morning and afternoon at school, young brains should surely be allowed to rest for the remainder of the day. Especially is working in the evening until late a source of brain-fag even to the strongest. No child under fourteen should be allowed to work after six o'clock. In Germany and Austria-Hungary the morning school is generally prolonged till 1.30, with a short interval for a light lunch, and the children return to school in the afternoon from 3 to 4.30 for "preparation"—in other words, to do their "home" lessons, and put into practice the theory taught during morning school. This seems to me a very excellent plan, and a great point in its favour is that if a child does not quite understand the task set, he or she can gain information from the other children, whereas at home the little brains often work in the dark, and are much worried thereby.

CO-EDUCATION.

Another aspect of school-life that has been freely discussed lately is the co-education of boys and girls. "Are united classes in schools advisable?" is the question that, for the most part, has been answered in the affirmative. A lady principal of a large training college read out a paper at a Queen's Hall meeting, in which she expressed an opinion to the effect that girls gain a greater sense of honour and *esprit de corps* by co-education, and that contact with boys results in a saner view of feminine limitations and a lesser desire to emulate masculine achievements in the playing fields. The old objection, she said, to mixed classes might be summed up by what one mother had once said to her: "I don't mind my boys being educated with girls, but I do mind my girls being educated with other people's boys." Another speaker—the head-master of a co-educational college—also well qualified to express an opinion on the subject, said that so far as his experience went, it had shown him that boys did not become effeminate at co-education schools, but under the natural conditions of family life acquired respect for women and became more truly manly.

MEN'S VIEWS OF WOMEN.

Dr. Johnson said of a woman speaking in public, "Sir, it is like a dog walking on its hind legs. It is not well done, but it is wonderful that it should be done at all." What would he have said of the modern Suffragette! The German Emperor has spoken very plainly concerning his ideas of woman's duties, and some time ago summed up his views thereon by remarking that a woman ought to be satisfied with the three K's—Küche, Kinder, and Kirche (Kitchen, Children, and Church). Clever women, he says, are dangerous, one and all, and ought to be muzzled before they can bite.

IN THE COURTS.

Contracts in Restraint of Trade.—Mr. Justice Neville's Regret.

A case decided by Mr. Justice Neville just before the rising of the Courts deserves more notice than it has received. A traveller, Mr. David Johnstone White, was engaged by Messrs. Henry Leatham and Sons, Ltd., millers, of Hull, at a salary of £208 per annum, the engagement being determinable at a monthly notice, and the agreement stipulating that for a period of five years after leaving the plaintiffs' employ Mr. White would not enter into the service of any one conducting a similar business within the United Kingdom without the written consent of Henry Leatham and Sons. The agreement was terminated by the Company on December 31st, 1905, and in September, 1906, Mr. White entered the service of William Marshall and Sons, of Grimsby. Thereupon his late employers sought an injunction to restrain him from alleged breach of a service agreement, and got it. One would have thought that if ever there was a covenant that was bad in law because it was too wide, this was one. A commercial traveller, whose connection is with millers, is bound down not to offer his services to any other miller in the kingdom for five years, whilst on his part he accepts an agreement from the people so binding him terminable at a month's notice. But Mr. Justice Neville, who not only felt but expressed much sympathy for the defendant, held himself to be powerless to protect him. His remarks must have been read with surprise. In the course of his judgment he said:—

There is no branch of the law that I am called upon to administer that I administer with so much reluctance as I do that concerned in this case. The increasing frequency of actions of this kind shows the exceeding pressure which is placed on the working commercial population in this country by the state of the law as it stands at present. In old times the general idea was that contracts in restraint of trade were to be looked upon at all events with suspicion by the Courts, but a modern doctrine has, unhappily, I think, prevailed that in questions between employer and employed, the interests of the employer alone are to be considered, and that no agreement is invalid, however oppressive and however fatal it may be to the possibility of the employee earning his own living in this country. That I can only comment upon, and I am here to administer the law as I find it. I must grant the injunction in this case which is asked.

We are glad to learn that there is to be appeal. If we read Mr. Justice Neville rightly, it is judge-made law that has upset the doctrine of "old times," which prevented contracts of this kind, and if that be so, and the Court of Appeal confirms the decision of the Court below, Parliament cannot too soon give its attention to the matter. It is simply monstrous to prevent a man pursuing his calling—the calling that gives him bread—as these millers seek to do.

LEGAL ANSWERS.

We only undertake to answer short legal questions in this column. In all cases where complicated questions, involving the consideration of documents, are put to us a fee of 5s. must accompany the inquiry.

Queries are requested to write on one side only of the paper, and to write separate questions on separate slips of paper.

GRIEVANCE AGAINST STEWARD.—H. P. (Newcastle).—You can do nothing in the matter; but as the steward was drunk you should complain to the captain, and let him deal with the man. The law is helpless in such cases.

CONDITIONS OF MARRIAGE.—O. E. A. (Whitstable).—The period of residence is 21 days, and the total fees payable amount to 9s. 7d.

THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH" AND BILE BEANS.—Why not go for them for having such swindling advertisements in. Bile Beans has been held by the High Court to be a fraud.

PAYMENT OF PENSION.—W. S. (Birmingham).—In reply to (1), the pension would not be paid by the Government without the signature of the pensioner as evidence that he is alive from time to time; and as to (2), the same applies to Post Office annuities. If it were not so the Government might easily be defrauded.

PARTICULARS OF ACCOUNT.—B. M. T. (Leeds).—You can demand details of the account, and if they are not given you can resist payment on the ground that the charge is excessive.

ISSUE OF WRIT.—E. P. (Tower Street).—A writ can be taken out by anyone, and there is no need to employ a solicitor.

LIABILITY OF HUSBAND.—R. P. (Glasgow).—If a wife signs a document for which she has no authority, the husband would not be bound unless the document was of a kind that the wife might have been reasonably assumed to have had authority to sign.

INTEREST IN PROPERTY.—CONSTANT READER (Leeds).—The eldest son takes in preference to the younger, so that your father has no claim as against the other family.

CHANGE OF NAME.—JAMES (Plymouth).—You need not do anything, as you cannot get the register altered. You can retain the name of Edwin, and you should take care that in making your will or signing any important deed you describe yourself as "Edwin, formerly known as Edward."

APPOINTMENT OF K.O.'s.—S. B. (Islington).—The Lord Chancellor appoints K.O.'s, and he can refuse to appoint applicants without giving reasons. Many more barristers usually apply than are appointed every year.

DISSOLUTION OF BUSINESS.—A. L. (Clapton).—You can dissolve by agreement, and after the estate is adjusted your liability would end.

LENGTH OF NOTICE.—J. N. (Lancs.).—If the man was engaged on the same terms as all the others he could not claim a longer notice, even though there was no written agreement.

RECOVERY OF WAGES.—CRACK POT (Newcastle).—You are clearly entitled to the higher wages, but you should make it clear that you have not drawn them when they were due, but have let them stand to your credit. If you sign any receipts for the wages you actually receive, you should do so as "on account," and not in full discharge.

LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION.—WILLING (Bristol).—You had better consult a solicitor, and he can then commence proceedings to obtain letters of administration, with the will annexed, and can get an order for the will to be brought into court. The trustee was not entitled to take any action in the matter without proving the will.

JOHN BULL'S POST-CARDS.

[JOHN BULL drops a few post-cards to some of his friends and acquaintances.]

To the Magistrates of the Feltham Bench.

Gentlemen,—I see you are anxious to make a name for yourselves, for the other day you fined three men for sleeping in a deer pen in Bushey Park. They were admittedly hard-working, but temporarily out of employment; without food, without a roof to cover them, and shivering in the cold. They found a place reserved for tame deer and crept into it, pulled down some hay from the rack, and slept. It is true that the half-a-crown fine you imposed was not harsh, and that you gave the men time to pay, but, in the circumstances, why should they have been fined at all? Are deer more than men? Should men lie out in the snow while they can find a shelter empty of deer?

Your treatment of the case shows a strange lack of human perspective. A Bench of Wisdom would have discovered in the harmless action of these men nothing except the cruel pressure of human necessities and tribulations, and would perhaps have added to their judgment of release a word of sympathy to hearten them on their hard, cheerless way. Lacking the spirit of human charity, you saw only an opportunity for punishment, for exacting the petty vengeance of the law against friendless and homeless poor. Go to! I am ashamed of you.

JOHN BULL.

To Professor Welln, of the Dental Institute of Stockholm.

Mein Herr,—Hail to you! You are a benefactor of the species, if what they say of you is true, and I have placed your name on my list of Friends of Humanity. It is reported that you have invented a painless method of stopping teeth in three minutes, and that you are coming to England to demonstrate. We have been wanting you for a long time in this country, where the art of stopping teeth consists, or seems to consist, of boring a hole in from our gums to our boots, blowing wind down the hole at a pressure of ten million tons on the ruptured nerves, and hammering stucco, amalgam, silver, gold, cement, or putty into it till we wish we had never been born. Wherefore, my dear Professor, I give you hearty welcome, for if you make good your claims, patented in Sweden, Russia, Germany, and Spain, you will be worth your weight in gold stopping. May you never have the toothache.

JOHN BULL.

To Mr. A. Moul, Manager of the Alhambra, London.

My dear Sir,—I do not blame you for booming the Zancigs for all you, and they, are worth; and from the showman's point of view, which is the point of view of the pay-box, they are worth a great deal. They are ingenious and you are enterprising, alike as their advocate, their defender, and their manager. Naturally, neither you nor they wish to give the game away while it is drawing. The veil of mystery must not be lifted. The cult of the psychists, so easily deluded, must be kept on the scene as long as possible, for they stimulate the general bewilderment, and increase the rush to see. As long as you keep the public talking you will keep the Alhambra full. And in this laudable endeavour, good luck to you.

Since I put the public on the right track a few weeks ago, more than one newspaper has been inundated with letters about the performance. At the time I wrote, the *Daily Mail* had all but committed itself to the announcement that it had at last discovered genuine telepathic phenomena. Even the Zancigs themselves were doubtful whether they were psycho-sensitives or music-hall performers. I said then that the performance was all code. Nobody who matters denies it now—not even you; not even the Zancigs. "I do not say there is no code," you say, "but I am not admitting one." Of course not. Why should you? Why should they? They are not out merely for the good of their health,

and you, like a good business man, are looking after the dividends. By keeping up the mystery with the aid of thousands of pounds' worth of free advertising in the public press, you are maintaining the public interest. One of these more or less distant days I prophesy that the Zancigs will add a chapter to their forthcoming reminiscences headed "How we Spoofed the *Daily Mail* and Mr. W. T. Stead." Meanwhile, my good sir, health to you. I am a shareholder in the Alhambra.

JOHN BULL.

To the Postmaster-General.

Dear Sydney,—Glad to hear you have got over your Christmas difficulties at the Post Office. Despite the disguised policemen and the detectives, the staff still retains its reputation for honesty, all the more to be wondered at considering the temptations and the wages.

May I suggest that the paltry practice of a rich department of the State underpaying and overworking its staff deserves personal investigation? Has it ever occurred to you what a dignified proceeding it would be if you had to augment your wages by going round at Christmas begging from door to door with a box and a subscription card? By the way, will you let me know if postmen are justified in refusing to accept old clothes and cold scraps in lieu of cash?

May I further suggest that, in these days of physical deterioration, it is not a healthy practice to keep boys on night-work? We have all been young, and although we now are old, we know that boys will be boys. It ought to be made a criminal offence to turn lads into the street at 12 o'clock at night, my dear Sydney, as appears to be your custom. Let the lads get up with the lark in the morning; there will be less coming in contact with that and other birds in the night. You have middle-aged men on your staff; take some of them off the easy day work, and save the lads from tuberculosis, etcetera. Best wishes for the New Year.

JOHN BULL.

P.S.—Don't attempt to tamper with betting telegrams. If you do, you'll get into a mess.

NEVER MOORE.*

"Young Moore" is a sub conscious imitator of Witty-Cur. Twice the price, and not half so funny. Our sides remain unshaken after its perusal. We read that "the secret of good pancake-making lies in the tossing; and this can only be really well done by a bull. Send the knife-boy round to the nearest china-shop. If they do not happen to have a bull in stock, you must toss the pan-cakes yourself; and if they fall into the fire, so much the better for your loved ones." But surely it would have been simpler to procure a bull from Ireland, or to remember that it is usually in stock (exchange), or to ask us.

Again: "When wild strawberries are brought into a garden to be tamed they should be kept as far as possible from the tame ones. Evil communications corrupt good manners; and, if this precaution be not observed, it is far more likely that your wild strawberries will teach the tame ones to swear like militiamen than that your tame strawberries will teach the wild ones to sing the Glory Song. Wild cream must be whipped until it behaves itself." Hence, we suppose, ice-scream.

Here is a strange coincidence. On January 28 we read, "William le Queux captured, 1910." On August 3, Witty Cur gives "Capitulation of Kenny." Can this be a case of coming events casting their shadows before?

* "Young Moore's Almanack for the Eventful Year 1907." (E. Grant Richards. 1s. net.)

ONLY 353 MORE DAYS.

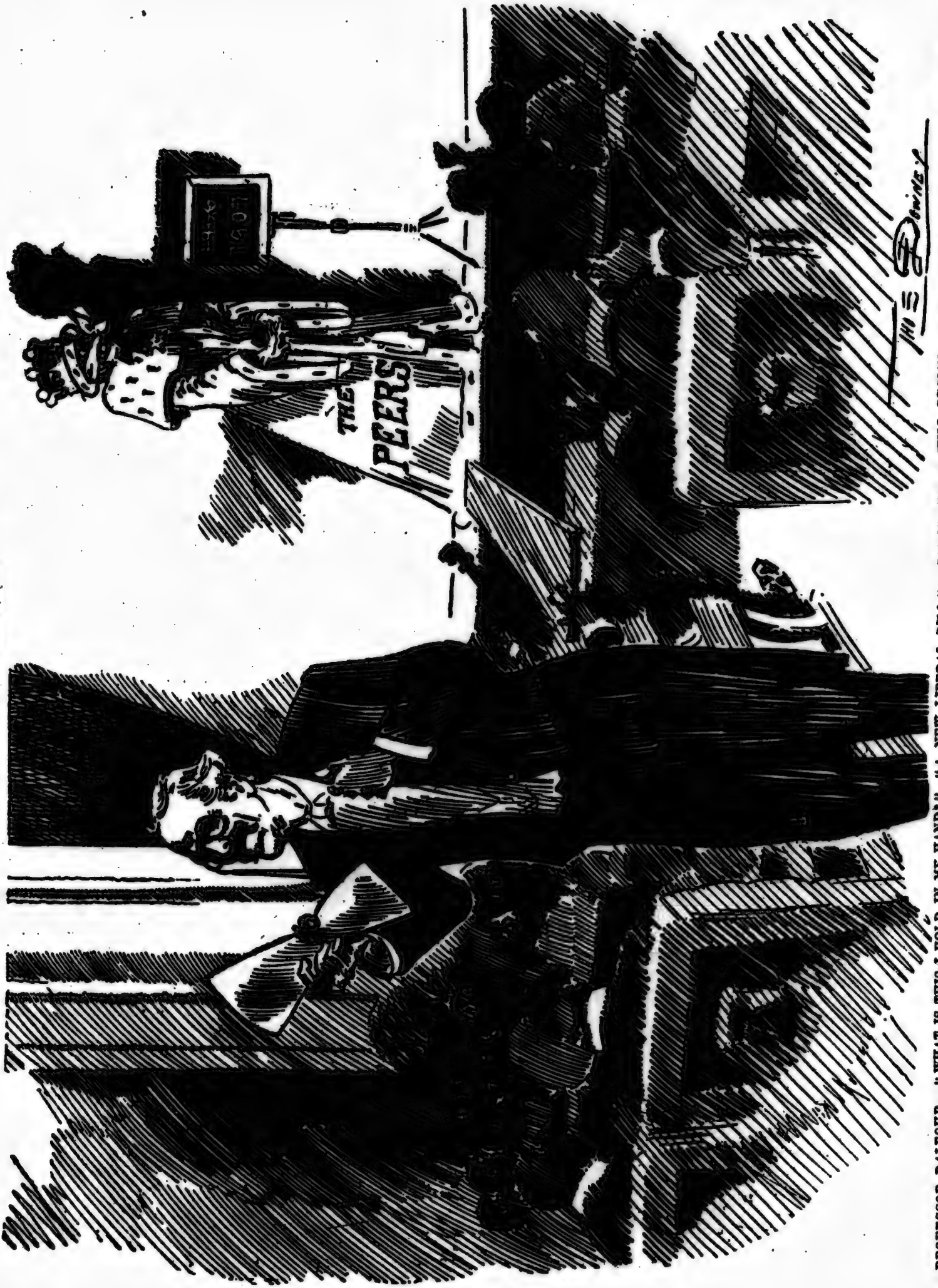
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Edited by JIM CROW, Esq.

THE POLITICAL ZANCIGS.

(AN OLD TRICK.)



PROFESSOR BALFOUR:—"WHAT IS THIS I HOLD IN MY HAND?" "A NEW LIBERAL BILL." "RIGHT. WHAT WILL BECOME OF IT?" "IT WILL BE CHUCKED OUT!"

THE BURGLAR AND THE BANK.

A STORY OF A CHANCE THAT NEARLY FAILED.

By GEORGE EDGAR.

It is a long time since I met him. When I was quite young he tried to rob me on a racecourse, Doncaster way. The idea was to lumber me up with the tale about a certain winner and to get me to part with my little lot to his friend. I did not like the suggestion, and said so.

Two months after I met him on a South country course. He again wanted to rob me, with the same hoary expedient. Again I objected.

In the next season, I met him on a Chester-bound train from Euston. He had a friend. Their idea was to get the fare out of me with three cards, but Crookie looked at my face and remembered. After that I saw a good bit of him, on racecourses, in Strand public-houses, and in music-halls—once I saw him get time at a police court. Generally speaking, we became good friends.

He was a well-dressed man; but for a shifty look in one eye and a predatory look in the other, he was a man who might have known better. He was forty, quite, his nose was turning from the pink to the purple, his military moustache had a billiard-room and pint-pot expression. Else, in outward seeing, he might have passed cursory scrutiny.

I knew him for a sneak thief with a rabbit liver. He knew I knew. We struck up a friendship on this understanding.

One summer afternoon I called in a Strand wine-house, and taking a long iced drink, sat in the quietest corner for reflection. Looking absently up, I got the challenge of the shifty eye and the predatory one. The face was different, the moustache was gone, there was a hint of hard times in the clothing, but the eyes were the eyes of Crookie Wilton.

He promptly sat down on a chair opposite to me.

"In this world," he said, taking it for granted; "it is good to meet a Christian gentleman."

I pushed the bell.

"Mine," he said, "is a very large ginger beer, as large as you keep them, and as cold as furthest North. You might," he added, as the waiter began to move, "add just a little gin and a big slice of lemon."

He turned to me with the air of a man who had done himself some good.

"When you've been walking from Hyde Park Corner to the end of the Strand and back again round Oxford Street, over and over again, all day, with half a dollar in your kick, life ain't all it's cracked up to be," he said, plaintively and promptly.

"Isn't business good?" I asked.

"Rotten," he said. "Carn't start a mug up nohow. There's not at this moment, to my knowledge, a single perisher in London who is likely to drop any oof, on a tale. There's not a day's racing within half a day's journey that I dare go to—I got stopped at Lewes last week. There's not a music-hall I can do business in without a hoofy tec. starting up like a shadow. Ever since I did that bit, I've been done in, so to speak. Damme, I've nearly had to work."

"Crookie," I said, "you're a wretched little purse shifter, a mean lumberer, a chicken-hearted teller of the tale. If you got away with a clear fiver, you'd think you'd buried your father, and kid yourself he was a Rothschild. Have you never done anything big—never got near a winter's keep in one handful—done in a duchess's jewels, or drilled a bank safe open?"

Crookie clinked the floating ice against the tumbler, gulped down the grey fluid, then clinked the ice against the glass again. His furtive eye winked at me and the predatory one leered. Then he looked over his shoulder. The wall opposite was safe; behind there was no one.

"You're a bit of a waster," he said, confidentially; "but on and off, I'll admit you've been a pal—as much a pal as a journalist can be, I reckon," he added grudgingly. "Well, only this winter I nearly got through a bank," he said, with subdued triumph.

"Nearly," I said, witheringly. "Stood outside, I reckon, and wished you were in and up to your elbows in glinting quids."

"Easy with your chin, you sarkie cully, and—yes, mine's as before."

It was, and very refreshing it looked.

"It was the chance of a lifetime," he went on, "and I nearly missed it. I should have done, but for help."

"Do tell me," I said; "don't cackle."

His predatory eye lit up.

"You know the London and Berkshire Bank, in Cheapside?"

"Yes," I said; "corner branch, by a passage, door sideways, towards both pavement and passage."

"That's it—right on the street with a thousand people passing every half hour. So help me, cully, I was the tenant of that bank for one hour, in January, between six and seven at night—the bank was mine."

He looked at me triumphantly.

"It was you, was it?" I said. "Well, I shouldn't have thought it; I read about it at the time."

"Yes—it nearly came off; dammit, I'll tell you all about it. I once told a man the tale in a bar up Cheapside and did him in for ten. He thought I was a wealthy man from the colonies—you know the story. Well, that brought me luck. I found three mugs in Cheapside in as many weeks, off and on."

"I suppose you lived there for a bit," I suggested.

"Well, luck's luck, you know, and I was up and down Cheapside pretty often. Well, one night, about five-thirty or six o'clock, I was opposite the London and Berkshire Bank, just waiting, there being nothing up, so to speak. And then I noticed something that made me see—the bank porter, shaking a mat at the door. 'All the pound-a-week snobs gone, I expect,' I thought; 'wish I could just get in.' And then I waited. The little porter fellow banged the mat, chucked it inside, went after it and banged the door. See?"

I nodded.

"Well, next night it was the same. All the 'pound-a-weeks' went one by one, between four-fifteen and five-thirty, and then the little porter fellow he miked round with a brush, turned the lights out, then banged the mat, went inside and slammed the door. I saw him night after night—see?"

"Well, I watched him do the same thing for a fortnight. It came off like clockwork, ten times in succession, and I began thinking. Now, breakin' in and assault ain't in my line, y' know, and when I thought of doing it, my heart used to stop. But I couldn't get that bank out of my mind. Safes—not for me, if I know it. But there'd be a drawer or two with some spare quids hanging about—perhaps fifty, perhaps five hundred, perhaps a 'thou.' I couldn't get it out of my head. It used to make me lie awake thinkin' of it, and, lord, how it made me sweat! But I got my mind made up—I couldn't see that chance of ten minutes with the bank drawers go begging. I was a drivelling idiot."

"Went one night—a Thursday. I was carrying a bit of stick with a bit of lead at the end of it, to thicken it. And I waited. Saw the snob perishers go, one by one, as I stood in the crowded street ten yards away. Saw the lights go out, one by one, and the porter fellow muddle around with his brush. And then my heart stood still. The time had come, and everything swam round for a second, I was so excited. He began banging his silly little mat outside, and I edged up slowly. When he turned to go in I walked in after him in the dusk silently, hoping no one would see. Before he could turn round, before he could look or speak, before he could do anything, I brought my bit of wood down on the back of his nut. Lord, it was a cosh, I tell you, and he fell straight where he stood, and cuddled up on the floor. I turned round and banged the door to and waited."

"God—how my heart whacked at my ribs and the sweat trickled down my cheeks. My tongue, it seemed hot and dry, my lips blistered. And I listened, listened, listened. Could hear the clip-clap of 'bus horses as they hoofed it by; the place shook as drays rumbled on; a newsboy called a late extra, and feet went by, pitter-patter, pitter-patter, pitter-patter, and not a blinkin' soul seemed to know. And the poor little porter fellow lay just at my feet, with his pale silly face as peaceful as a sleeping baby's, and he breathed with a funny little snore that seemed to rattle and catch at the back of his neck. Blimey—I've done my bits of thick often enough, but I didn't like the feel of that bit of wood on the porter fool's head, and I didn't like the look of the silent bank and the sound that came like a roar from the street outside."

"I licked my lips and pulled myself together. My heart was rattling like a motor-bicycle, my nerves were as fluffly as feathers—but the bank was mine. I suppose I'm no blinkin' artist. Muggin' is my game, and I'll tell the tale with any man, but, lord! the feel of the bit of wood falling soft and hard on the porter man's head made me chicken-hearted. I looked at him and pushed him away with my feet, and then I thought. I felt his wrist and his pulse was beating, so I trussed him up with some cord and rammed an evening paper into his mouth. No one came, the bank was empty and still, you could hear the big office clock ticking louder than the traffic of the streets."

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J. 12.1.07

C.A.A.

"How much did you get?" I asked, anxious to get the story to its climax.

Crookie paused and drank steadily from his clucking tumbler.

"You'll be surprised when I tell you. I'd not thought it out. You must remember it was my first big job, and I never gave it proper thinking. I tore round the office and went over it, drawer by drawer, round all the clerk snobs' desks, round all the counter drawers, and in the manager's office. Some of 'em were locked and some of 'em were open. One was full of cheques—heaps of 'em for hundreds, cancelled, and no good. Others were full of papers. But in the open drawers not a cent. in money and not a bit of paper with a figure on it. I had a little jemmy, a gem of a weapon for drawers, and, with every nerve on edge, I opened drawer after drawer where the paying clerks work. I'd counted on at least twenty pounds being left out of the safe, and only in one drawer was there money. Four and sevenpence halfpenny in silver and copper; half a quid, twisted—evidently a dud—and a two-shilling postal order. In the centre of the room was a huge safe—big and strong. The light out of a street lamp winked on its shining green-painted sides. It seemed to laugh at me and say: 'It's all in here, every blinking quid.' And there was I and a jemmy that would stand a twist of half a hundredweight, but would cockle up like a British bayonet if shoved at anything solid, up against a triple armour-plated safe, A 1 at Lloyds, with ten-inch plates like a battleship.

"You can imagine me all this time, in a blue funk; my heart working harder and harder, like a two-miler's when he's putting on a spurt in the last lap; my head buzzing and spinning, as I went round the bank like a madman, greedy to find something worth shifting and afraid of being found out. And all the time thinking and thinking of the little porter fellow, who'd done me no harm, with his white face and a bad dinge in the back of his head. When I came up against that safe, good and hard, I just tinkled it with my jemmy and gave it up. I'd had enough. And for all this I'd get four and sevenpence halfpenny and a two-bob postal order; a fright that would lay me up for a fortnight, and that porter chap breathing silly gurgles at the back of his neck. I was sorry for that porter fellow; I wouldn't have hit him hard for less than a fiver had I known. I gave the safe up, and then—

"Strike me blind, leaning over the counter, in the shadow at the far end of the big room, I saw another man. There was just enough light to show that he was another porter man, different from the little fellow I had laid out, but in the same uniform. He was smiling like a Chinese idol. My teeth chattered when I saw his grinning mug, and something went like a cold wave down my back when I saw his hand held a revolver, on which a stray gleam of light from a street lamp played and made the barrel look like a cold blue snake. I dropped my jemmy with a clank when I looked into the face and into the end of that bit of six-barrelled sudden death.

"Very pretty," the porter man said, in a whisper; "you are a pleadin' amateur, you are. Come out of the centre of the room into the shadow here, so I can look at you. And mind, make a noise, and I'll shoot you. Scream, if you dare, and it's your last breath. Drop on your hands and knees, and creep."

"I was all out. I did as I was told. I crept on my hands and knees, watching the blue gun with one eye. We stood finally face to face in the corner where the counter reached the wall, in a deep shadow.

"Listen," the voice said. "You gave my mate that cosh on the head. Hear the silly swine burbling!"

"I did not say a word to him. I only wondered in a vague way what he would do, how soon he would raise a cry, how quickly the bank would be full of police.

"Why did you do it?" he asked.

"I trembled as I spoke.

"Oof," I said; "I want the money."

"Oof!—a nice cuckoo you are to hunt oof. Strike me, I'd as lief shoot you and end it!"

"For God's sake, don't shoot!" I nearly shrieked, as I saw his finger work with a tense nervous jerk on the trigger.

"You hit my mate," he said.

"N—not hard," I said; "only very soft and gentle."

"He laughed a quiet, bitter laugh.

"Enough of this jesting. Look hard at me," the porter said.

"I looked, but it didn't seem to help.

"Crookie Wilton," he said, "you're the softest pig on the pinch in London. Whatever made you turn burglar and try a bank safe with a three-and-sixpenny jemmy?"

"This seemed a bit strange from the porter fellow. I began to rumble, said nothing, and waited.

"See!" he began, and his teeth clicked with a cold snap. "I'll take you in, though you ought to be dead meat. That porter dud is no mate of mine. You did him in nicely, and saved me bother—that's to you. This uniform got me in. You must have mixed 'em up and seen double. I was in ten seconds before you. Look hard—perhaps you know me, Billy Wood, of Holborn, better known as Toff."

"It was as good as being reprieved. Know him! There's not a man on the town that doesn't. He's been in more cribs and come out with the boodle safe than any man from Piccadilly to the Three Nuns. For the first time I breathed freely.

"Toff," I said, "I'm glad to meet you. This job is over my weight. You were here first, you can have it. I'll get out of it!"

"He put up the sudden death.

"No, you won't," he snapped. "You're in, and you stop in. Stand where you are," he said, "and stay where you are. Don't blink, don't wink, and don't whisper."

"He crept on his hands and knees to the safe, and, lying flat on the floor, worked for twenty minutes. I could not see what he was doing, could only hear the even purr of a hard drill biting the right kind of hole into a lock. Twenty minutes he worked without a stop—the place as silent as the grave; only the whirr, whirr of steel on steel. Then softly I heard a strain and a pull, and the bank safe swung open.

"The quiet was disturbed by a gasping sound.

"Toff looked round, and I looked, too.

"The porter was sitting up, rubbing his head. He was still dazed, but coming to.

"Go for him," Toff said; "go quick and hard, but sure." It was a whisper, but it bit sharp like a frosty wind. "If you don't out him, he'll out us."

"I crept towards the dazed porter from behind, and caught him by the neck. My nerves were tense and true. The first shock of desperate action had worn off and left me inured. I took him by the throat and squeezed him as he squirmed, squeezed so that he could only sob; squeezed until his white face went purple and his head dangled down. When he did not seem to breathe, I let him drop.

"Crookie, Crookie; come, quick! Leave the burbler. He's bought enough!"

"I heard Toff's whispered instruction and crept along the bank floor on my hands and knees.

"He was standing by the safe with a big black bag in his hand, and there was a litter of paper on the floor.

"It's time we were out of it," he said, without wasting a word.

"We crept to the rear of the silent bank. The side door lay in a little passage. Toff quickly pulled the bolt, and threw the door open. I went out first and a policeman at the corner came slowly down. My breath caught in my throat; I felt all feet; and as if all the feet had gone to sleep.

"Toff followed quickly and clanged the door. He saw the peeler. 'It's all right, constable; good evening,' he said as cool as you please, and as quick as thought.

"Late, aren't you?" the constable said, for the sake of saying something—never rumbling a ha'porth.

"Yes," said Toff, "the boys are workin' late," and with that, and his cool firm hand shoving at my elbow, we went straight into Cheapside. Two seconds more, and I should have had a fit.

"Lord-love-a-duck, I was glad to be out of it, and no error.

"Toff said: "Crookie, my cully, you look white; your nerves aren't any good for this work, but you put it across the porter perisher twice to perfection. Have a brandy—I guess you've earned that much."

"We went into the Holborn station rooms, and Toff ordered the drinks.

"I thought you were going to make it a dud, but you came in handy, cockie. Good health!"

"Good health," I said, sipping the brandy.

"He put his hand into the little bag and brought out a stiff brown paper bag marked 'fifty.'

"Here's your whack," he said; "now let's hop it."

"And we hopped it fast enough. Rum start, wasn't it?"

"Very rum," I said. "Won't you have another?"

Crookie looked at his glass and sighed. "Don't mind if I do," he said. Then, as an after-thought: "Pity I wasn't up to the blinkin' business. Toff got away with three thousand five hundred."

"And the porter?" I asked curiously.

"Oh! he's all right. He came out of the hospital in three weeks. I was glad of that. I wouldn't have hurt the little fellow for a fiver."

There was a long silence.

"Can't say I like the great game," said Crookie. "M

BULL'S EYES.

CONSEQUENCES:—

A "Springbok".....met.....an Englishman.....on the football field.....The S. said, "I've come to learn.".....The E. said, "Anything I can do—".....The consequence was.....the Englishman had a "trying" time.....And the world said, "These youngsters of yours are growing up, John."

A Progressive.....met....."John Bull".....out in the cold.....The P. said, "I shall never smile again.".....J. B. said, "Try 'Witty-Cur's Almanack.'".....The consequence was.....the P. opened his mouth wider than ever.....And the world said, "He's joined the 'yell-oh' Press; we knew he would."

King Peter.....met.....the Shade of Alexander.....in Belgrade.....Peter said, "Please, it wasn't me.".....Alexander said, "Your turn is coming.".....The consequence was.....a King cowered.....And the world said, "It will only Servia right, Peter."

SOME UNFOUNDED RUMOURS:—

That "Witty-Cur's Almanack" contains useful information.

That a tax on bachelors will be the first reform agitated for when women have a vote.

That the Rev. Dr. Aked ached to take charge of John D. Rockefeller's New York chapel.

That the latest thing in hats is "a felt want."

That a certain tenor is to be called Signor Carezzo in future.

That our Army officers are a "ragged" lot.

That a man has been discovered who did not laugh over "Witty-Cur's Almanack."

That the Emperor of the Sahara has deserted.

That the Salvation Army has begun to "save."

PERVERTED PROVERBS:

Vulgarity is the mother of wit.

Modesty is the best policeman.

It is better to have tossed and lost than never to have tossed at all.

There is no pleasure without gain.

In the midst of life we are in debt.

All that glitters can be sold.

Many a Mick makes a muck.

TWICE DRUNK IN ONE DAY.

MAGISTRATE AND HOME SECRETARY.

The *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette* is responsible for the above headlines in reporting a case of an habitual drunkard about whom there had been some correspondence between the Home Secretary and the North London stipendiary magistrate. Rather rough on Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. Fordham!

An American girl named Edwina raffled herself the other day. She wanted a breadwina.

An Australian nigger, hearing that Eve was tempted by a serpent, has spent the greater part of 1906 waging war on all snakes within a twenty-mile radius of his gunyah.

At Worcester a man named Baker, after being convicted by one jury, was acquitted by another, the first conviction having been quashed because one of the jurymen had gone out to buy a bottle of stout. No temperance reformer will ever make Baker believe that drink is a curse.

The *Daily News* has started a lantern-lecture campaign on behalf of the Progressive party at the forthcoming L.C.C. election. There will be plenty of slides.

On the score of expense, the Prime Minister says a return of the landowners of Great Britain cannot be given. What about a return of the land?

The Imperial and the Greenwich Theatres came "under the hammer" last week. The drama is taking the knock.

The *Daily News* relates an affecting anecdote of a horse which bit at one of the contents bills of a competition journal. It is a different kind of animal, as a rule, which has a bite at such things. He—haw!

"Robert the Devil" is the name of a recent book. It is not a police story.

The recent fire at *Punch* office was not serious, despite the dryness of the matter.

You pays your ha'pennies and you takes your choice:—

Star.

Evening News.

The severe illness from which Karakoul suffered during the greater portion of the summer has affected his respiratory organs, and he will never again be the good hurdler he once was.

W. Jarvis still retains Karakoul, who is a horse that I can confidently recommend to pay for following.

The man who is going to the dogs generally comes home with the cat.

A resident of the Isle of Wight states that all the inhabitants of the world could stand on the island without wetting their feet. What about their lips?

We never hear of the prodigal girl;

Does she ever come home again?

'Tis the prodigal son who gets the fun

When the fatted calf is slain.

The Master of the Rolls wants to know if there is anything on a typewriter which would depict a kiss. Of course—a flushed cheek.

A woman up at the court the other day informed the magistrate that she couldn't help skidding. The path of virtue is a slippery affair.

General Kuropatkin's book on the Russo-Japanese War is said to have been confiscated. He must have told the truth in it.

Woolwich Arsenal is going "great guns" for the League Football Championship.

Some papers have been concerned because an American lady recently took a pig in to dinner. Why? Nothing new.

"Let Punch enliven your winter evenings," says an advertisement. Of course, it means the beverage.

According to Mme. Alla Nazimova, a Russian actress, the musical comedy is a medicine for brain fag. "Like cures like," in fact.

Speaking at Gravesend, the Earl of Darnley said, "I place myself before you as an example of deficiency in education." Other peers please copy.

The Army is short of officers, and the War Office is full of them.

The Suffragettes are "going for" the Lords next. They don't like the short Commons.

"A Miracle of the Turf" has just been published. We suppose the hero makes a fortune by betting. It is fiction.

Will "Nelly Neil"? No, but Edna May.

Speaking of the Sandwich Islanders, Mark Twain says, "When they wanted to adorn themselves beyond what Nature gave them, they put on a pair of spectacles." Was it for adornment? We specs not.

How Madame Zancig works the game

We do not care,

We're glad our wives can't do the same—

'Twould not be fair

To pounce on every little thought—

Lay all our secrets bare.

"Yellow Peril Threatened," says the *Express*. By the Yell-oh Press, of course.

The Deputy-Mayor of Derby thinks that more music would mean less crime. But don't "flats" and "sharps" bring it about?

J. B. Connolly, a popular American writer of sea stories, has joined the U.S. Navy. He wants to learn something of the sea.

"Zancigs Work in Silence," says the *Daily Mail*. Quite so; the halfpenny Press does all the shouting.

Lockjaw is on the increase. No wonder "Witty-Cur's Almanack" is out.

An American journalist thinks that English papers are too solemn. Yet the *Daily Mail* prints the paper in Braille so that those who cannot see its jokes may feel them.

The electric belt has its uses. One found in the stomach of a Tasmanian shark led to the identification of the digested owner. But the shark could not stomach the belt.

A sick constable sent a note to his sergeant last week informing him that he was suffering from "eternal pains." A damnable complaint.

The editor of *Tit-Bits* states that he pays a guinea a column for original matter. What does he do with it?

The P.C. sighed, a sharp hat-pin
From Suffragette headgear
Had chased away his jolly grin
And conjured up a tear;
"You're with us, then," the lady cried,
"Yes, I see the point," he sighed.

A "drunk" up before the Beak the other day could not understand why the magistrate refused to accept his plea of "not guilty," considering that he believed him implicitly when he pleaded "guilty" on the last occasion.

Two dwarfs have just been married. The service was longer than usual to make up the deficiency.

A Scarborough lady has instructed a local saddler to supply dog collars to anyone who can show they are not able to afford to buy them. She can collar our "Witty-Cur"—when the news-agent is not looking.

New Year's Day opened at Hull with three fires. They do study economy in that Yorkshire town.

The "Hicks" is a theatre that no teetotaler can go to. To say, "I have been to the ah-hics" would simply give the show away.

When a lady of Sullivan, Indiana, was asked at the altar, "Will you take this man to be your husband?" she replied "No." She explained she had changed her mind, but the bridegroom's wink at one of the pretty bridesmaids might have upset her equilibrium.

Another New Year's resolution: Never to read anything written by a convict, and thus keep out of Harmsworth's way.

A *Times* correspondent wants to know why we ignore the grand old name "Vanguard" in the name of battleships. We have enough of the name on land.

Great Thoughts tells us that one of the most beautiful attributes of the child is a readiness to give. Trouble or sauce?

Miss Ellaline Terriss, after a concert at Guy's Hospital, announced her intention of supporting a bed for ten years, and also a cot for the same period. The physical force craze has many devotees, but surely this will be a record.

G.P.O. official statistics indicate tremendous increases in the mails last Christmas. Christmas pudding is very stodgy.

A well-known Cumberland magistrate was buried in an evening dress suit in accordance with his wish. He anticipates having a good time.

"Baker's return to Tooting," says a poster. It won't mean more bread, but there will be food for thought.

According to Mr. J. Carlowitz Ames, the ultra moderns are apparently wallowing in a sea of cacophony. We have heard the hiccup very frequently of late.

"What makes you maddest?" asks a morning contemporary. When we go to buy a "Witty-Cur" and find they are all sold out.

Plane men—joiners.
Headquarters—a pillow.
A Rash intruder—measles.
Fare trade—a tramcar's.
A Serious Case—A doctor without one.

A weekly paper has lately been issued in raised letters for the use of the blind. It has evoked a great deal of feeling.

The peace problem of Europe—"I wonder if the other fellow's gun is really loaded."

Dogs and men both have summer pants—but the dog more often has a fit.

It's a singular fact that the man who is always in a pickle doesn't preserve his reputation.

A firm of bootmakers announce, "Our dancing shoes for young ladies are simply immense."

The only thing that beats a good wife is a bad husband.

The proper name of the bumble bee is humble bee. But, humble as he is, he won't allow himself to be sat upon.

LIPTON'S TEA

THE
LARGEST SALE IN THE WORLD.

Popularity
Proves Superiority.

Lipton's Teas Excel All Others.

DRINK AND ENJOY
LIPTON'S DELICIOUS TEAS
Direct from the Tea Gardens.

THE BEST. **1/9** THE BEST.
NO HIGHER PRICE.

LIPTON'S SPECIAL
AT
WONDERFUL VALUE. **1/6** A SPLENDID TEA.
BETTER THAN OTHERS'
"BEST."

RICH, PURE TEA
AT
1/- 1/2 & 1/4

Buy from the Growers,
LIPTON, LTD.,
TEA PLANTERS, CEYLON.
BRANCHES AND AGENCIES EVERYWHERE.

JOHN BULL'S LETTER BAG.

[JOHN BULL replies to some of his numerous correspondents.]

AN ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENT, who describes himself as "a small tradesman who has done very well this last week," sends us a postal order for 5s., as he is "afraid sometimes philanthropic institutions don't always deliver at the really right address." We have been delighted to be our correspondent's almoner, and have applied the money in the purchase of picture-books for three poor little crippled boys, whose sad cases have been brought to our notice by a Muswell Hill reader of our "Letter to Santa Claus."

A LADY, who describes herself as "Colonel Senior's Daughter," writing from West Ealing, takes exception to our reference in a recent issue to an article in the *Christian*, in which Colonel Senior gives an extraordinary story of how he came, when suffering from colic, to find the page in a medical book containing exact particulars of the remedy he required. We are informed that Colonel Senior is no longer alive, and should deeply regret if anything we have said has caused a moment's pain to any member of his family. A reference to our paragraph, however, will show that there was not one word of reflection upon the personal integrity of the late Colonel, whose Army record we know to have been a most honourable and distinguished one. All we did object to was the suggestion that, as the result of long and earnest prayer, he was put on the track of a homoeopathic medicine. These, however, are things which cannot be argued about.

W. G. G. (London, N.E.) and others write in reference to the *Football Chat* competitions. We are informed that the great bulk of the coupons for the competitions for which they entered were stopped by the postal authorities upon technical grounds, and, therefore, although it entailed upon the promoters the loss of something like a thousand pounds for postages, printing, etc., they notified all competitors that the competitions were cancelled and that they would either return the entrance fees or place them to their credit for the next competition which could be arranged. We have seen the notice which was sent to all such competitors when the competitions were again started, and understand that the vast majority of the people interested appreciated the course taken in the matter. Of course, it is rough upon the few who were correct in the stopped competition and whose letters managed to slip through, but what other fair course was there for the *Football Chat* people to adopt than that they took?

J. H. (Swansea) and "CHRIS" (Islington).—If you must have a flutter of this kind, go in for the *Football Chat* competition run by Mr. Chas. Windust, at Middelburg, Holland.

E. C. W. (Leeds) has a lady friend who replied to an advertisement offering employment for spare time, and was then informed by E. Godfrey and Co., of 54, Somerset Street, Cathay, Bristol, that it was necessary to send 1s. for particulars, as so many applications were made "out of mere curiosity." Having sent her 1s., she then received a recipe for facial neuralgia, and also a "laundry glazing secret," and was told all that she had to do was to insert similar advertisements in the papers to those which had decoyed her, and then forward these wonderful secrets on the same terms! It is a good joke, but a somewhat dangerous one.

J. G. (Wimbledon) has an opportunity of obtaining a position in the advertising department of a large firm, and wishes to take lessons in the "art" of advertisement writing. We are afraid this is not a thing which can be taught, and if J. G. is wise he will trust to his own ingenuity.

T. P. N. (Ilford) writes an interesting letter on the Consular Service, pointing out the difficulty of getting sufficient linguists. He reminds us that Sir Frederick Burton was reputed to have acquired over 70 languages and dialects, and asks "How many Englishmen have acquired even a colloquial acquaintance with seven?" T.P.N. says he "wants to be a Consul, and with the Consuls stand"; therefore, he asks, where in London can he have lessons in Russian, Modern Greek, Roumanian, Bulgarian, Servian, Turkish, Modern Arabic, Yiddish, Italian, and Spanish. He evidently means business.

A. C. (Kent).—We quite agree; but we do not think we will give them the benefit of a free advertisement by awarding a biscuit.

S. T. (Wales).—Your question is one for a local architect and surveyor. Strange as it may seem, we are not omniscient.

"HIGHLY AMUSED" (London) shakes our faith in the Dunmow Flitch ceremony by telling us that one of the recent pairs of recipients lead a "cat and dog" life at home, and that the flitch was secured in their case entirely by "spoof."

F. S. W. (Cleckheaton).—Too many biscuits might spoil their breath.

H. W. (Wimbledon) deserves a biscuit for being one of our regular subscribers and overlooking all our references to the British Watch Company.

G. C. W. (Gillingham) thanks us for saving him from the British Watch Company, and congratulates us on our courage. Bless him, we shall be even bolder by and by.

J. C. L. (Liverpool) draws our attention to the same firm.

H. B. (Birmingham).—All right, we will try and leave out the French, but little bits will creep in now and then.

Mrs. WALKER (of Christchurch) writes indignantly denying the statement of "Murray (Birmingham)," referred to in our issue of December 29th to the effect that she rewarded with a penny a child who brought back a bag containing eight pounds in gold and several P.O.'s. Mrs. Walker says the incident is an "absolute fabrication without a word of truth." At least, that is what the good lady *did* say. But she favours us with a second letter, in which she says:—"The incident had absolutely faded from my memory, but since writing you, something recalled it suddenly." Was this "something" a little newspaper cutting to which we directed the lady's attention? In any case, Mrs. Walker says the facts have been grossly exaggerated. And there we must leave the matter.

R. J. S. (Meopham) reminds us that a JOHN BULL was published in 1825. Well, we have grown in wisdom and stature since then. He advocates "compulsory volunteering." All right, if he will agree to free prisoners, sane lunatics, and miserly extravagance.

V. F. S. (Blackheath).—When people offer prizes for the solution of a simple riddle, it is natural that the winners' shares should be small. No doubt the result was disappointing, but why do you think the competition a fraud?

J. R. (Hanwell) advises commercial travellers to take us "as a tonic and antidote to rebuffs of business." All right, let them read JOHN BULL and smile all over.

R. Y. P. (Muswell Hill), F. R. (Maidenhead), R. W. S. (Cambridge), G. F. A. (Lewes), and half the remaining people in these islands inquire about the Brahma Watch Company; O. S., E. M. (East Dulwich), R. E. (Bradford), and a few million more about the British Watch Company; "Cautious" (Glasgow), R. A. D. (Bromley), C. H. (Crouch End), and some thousands about the Observatory Watch Company. Many of them are "readers from the first," but not very attentive readers, we fear. We shall soon have to put up a notice that no more warnings about Watch Companies will be received or issued.

J. L. (Shepherd's Bush).—Thanks for the pretty card and all your useful hints.

M. D. (Stoke).—Glad you were amused. We wish your story had been in time for "Witty-Cur's Almanack." It was very brave of you to stand in the street with JOHN BULL in one hand and your umbrella in the other, withstanding the charge of a bullock. Did he like the bull's-eyes?

W. A. B. (Abergele).—Whiteley's, being "universal providers," would doubtless sell you a human skull if you are dissatisfied with your own. The Adams Company evidently want to advertise their motors. This is not an infrequent desire among manufacturing companies, "Witty-Cur" says.

"SCOTTER" (Dundee).—Glad we saved you from Tanqueray, and that you got your photograph back. You were lucky.

"STILL TRYING" (Northampton).—We deeply sympathise with your bad luck, but we do not see why your temperance principles should militate against your success in business. Why not make a bargain with the landlords of the houses which your colleagues frequent? They could have an old crusted wine-bottle filled with foast-and-water for you, if you paid for it as sherry.

E. C. (Pontardawe) objects to the "double numbers" of certain periodicals. He says the only things doubled are the prices and the advertisements. Why not be content with JOHN BULL and "Witty-Cur's Almanack"?

It has just occurred, "after dining," to W. G. (Kennington Oval) that "Witty-Cur" and "Whitaker" are similar in sound. What an astounding coincidence!

G. H. D. (Shepton Mallet).—Yes, we noticed that the "polite burglar" escaped. Perhaps he will not be so polite next time.

R. T. S. (Piccadilly) says that, without the House of Lords, England would not have become the greatest nation on earth. But what have the Lords ever done to increase that greatness? And, if the people's will is not to be respected, why trouble to have elections or a House of Commons at all? R. T. S. compares the Lords to a "dear, good, and faithful old nurse," who laughs "because she can only abolish herself, which she won't do, as she likes her job." But perhaps the master may come round presently and tell her she is incorrigibly lazy, and not wanted any more now that the children have grown up.

"FREETHINKER" (Liverpool) writes:—"Coming long that bussey thorgfair London Road, it hapend I droped my john bull. Turing back to pick it up, there was such scramble to see how wood get it first that I got nocked down, the result been that john bull has got a Fresh suply of new Costimers. It did so much Good that I must Have a try in some other bussey thourfair." We will consult President Rusvelt and "Witty-Cur."

H. S. (Market Harborough) writes in defence of telepathy. He says he cannot recommend JOHN BULL to all his friends, as he is afraid they would discover the source of his best jokes. Then why not recommend "Witty-Cur's Almanack" to them?

W. M. (Beaconsfield) says he cussed hard when invited to make a custard with a rotten egg. Has he heard of the judge who received a bad egg in the eye and exclaimed, with a smile, "There is some mistake. This must have been intended for my Brother Bacon"?

H. W. (Bolton) asks us to comment upon a "mysterious powder" advertised as "inducing soul-visions." We will buy a 2s. packet and find out.

J. W. M. (Tipton).—Thanks for valuable information.

"ANTI-CANT" (Huddersfield).—We have long given up blushing, but we find your compliments grateful and comforting. We hope you will like "Witty-Cur's Almanack" equally well.

"VIATOR" (Jerez de la Frontera, Spain) sends some interesting information about the trade of the locality he is visiting. He says that, in consequence of the revival of the taste for sherry, orders from England are increasing. He adds:—"Surely a glass of the amber wine of Jerez is more fitted for a gentleman than a potion of strong waters, however diluted. He who drinks sherry thinks sherry, and acts chivalrously, so far as my observation extends. If any of your readers are meditating a trip in search of climate, sport, and the artistic, combined with economy, you might do worse than advise them to visit the sherry-land." All right, a glass of wine with you, sir.

"WALRUS" (Penzance).—We always like to oblige Cornishmen, but the geography of *Lloyd's Weekly* is beyond us.

G. A. Z. (Strand).—Thanks for your ingenious suggestions.

"AN ADMIRER" (Shrewsbury).—The advertisement of the Evans' Vacuum Cap sounds all right. If it did answer, we suppose people would buy. But the best cure for falling hair is to "keep your hair on," in the metaphorical sense of the phrase.

M. J. D. (Hull).—Of course, if Cléopâtre spoke truth, he is not responsible for red rubber. But we want more than mere denials.

L. W. W. (Lambeth Palace Road) sends a report of the Camberwell Council from the *South London Press*:—"Councillor Barnes remarked that, as he was not equal to the task of doing the work (of checking bills), he sat down and read JOHN BULL for the remaining hour. (Laughter)." Another Councillor objected. Of course, Councillor Barnes must read JOHN BULL. So we shall be delighted to check the bills for him while he reads "Witty-Cur's Almanack."

J. P. (Catford) had to stay up all night, and enjoyed it because he had JOHN BULL to read. He found something about a half-sovereign in an egg, and says he could have believed it if there had been another sixpence, as it would then have been half a guinea-fowl's egg. No wonder the place is called Catford!

A. B. (Westbourne Grove).—Why?

H. W. D. (Bristol).—Thanks for your amusing suggestion for a cartoon.

H. R. (Surliton Hill).—We are tired of the *Times* Book Club and the Soap Trust, but you may find something about them in "Witty-Cur's Almanack."

"DISGUSTED" (Croydon).—So are we.

A. J. P. (Exeter) complains that Stephen Smith and Co., Limited (51, Malmesbury Road, Bow) took 6d. for a sample of wine and never sent it. Perhaps A. J. P. is luckier than he thinks.

E. R. T. (Kingston-on-Thames) affords more information to the detriment of Mr. Rackham.

"THIRTY" (Cardiff) also answered the advertisement of "home work" inserted by E. Godfrey and Co. He would have done much better to buy two copies of "Witty-Cur's Almanack."

A. E. N. (Ilford).—We are not a Court of Criminal Appeal, and we have not the full facts before us.

W. E. (Peckham) sent to a newspaper a three-act lyrical comedy, and cannot get it back. So the work, on which he "spent so many long days and long nights," is lost. Too bad! "Witty-Cur's Almanack" is the only thing we can prescribe to cheer him up.

W. J. P. (Wem) sent 2s. to the Temple Publishing Company (Duke Street, Strand) for a method of learning to play the piano in a few weeks. Since then he has heard nothing more. Read "Witty-Cur's Almanack" and learn to play the harp.

A. J. M. (Notting Hill) seems to possess convictions scarcely more settled than those of a certain other politician. After having set debates with Socialist leaders, he accepted their views and joined the Fabian Society. "But," says he, "a short acquaintance with that body reconverted me to my old position of an advanced Radical." He thinks "the political success of Socialism will be the beginning of its downfall." Naturally, because it is impracticable and illogical. But we do not anticipate even its temporary success.

W. M. (Bethnal Green) suggests the Royal prerogative as a solution of the difficulties between the two Houses, but, he adds, "I, W. M., have no desire that my hand should be seen moving in this matter." It shall not.

J. S. (Southampton).—The sentences have been reduced.

E. J. S. (Clerkenwell) says his brother-in-law catches skylarks for the table. At any rate, many birds sold as larks are not larks at all. Perhaps E. J. S.'s brother-in-law was having a lark with him.

T. C. (Adelphi) must remember that everybody is a consumer, but that everybody is not a producer. Moreover, the producers of one article benefit if they obtain all other articles cheaply. A nasty thing is not really cheap.

M. S. A. (Fitzroy Square) says:—"The speeches Lady Warwick reads, read well—better than they are read by herself," but he doubts whether she understands her subjects. He notes that, whenever discussion is promised at a Socialist meeting, "illness, absence abroad, or an expected grandchild conveniently and diplomatically intervene" to keep her away. We must not be too exacting in our demands upon the fair sex.

F. A. R. (London) tells us that Lyons are in the habit of burning their stale bread and cakes instead of giving them away, and that one of the employees who recently protested against this wanton waste of food was threatened with dismissal. We can scarcely credit the story, and should like to hear the other side of it.

H. E. H. F. (Hammersmith) inquires about Harvey Taylor and Co., whom we have already discountenanced. He approves of our attitude towards the Servian regicides. It is true that they have not been punished yet, but they are trembling in their shoes, and we hope to hear soon that they have been brought to justice.

W. L. (Manchester).—We have already referred to Dudley Salt's offer of houses and property to the purchasers of their tea. Judging by the picture you send, we are not attracted by their originality in architecture. In order to do all they profess, they must make a large profit on their tea.

J. L. (Shepherd's Bush).—Thanks for enclosures, which we will lose no time in reading. Avoid the Magic Foot Draught Company and all other quacks.

W. E. L. (Twickenham) is dissatisfied with the methods of the Midland Counties Advertising Company, of Sheffield. He certainly seems to have some grounds for complaint.

F. W. C. (Alford) objects to an advertisement of the Civil Service Supply Association, which points out that it cannot sell proprietary articles at a discount, but that it devotes the profits to reducing the prices of other goods. This may be a grain of dust thrown in customers' eyes, but scarcely deserves to be called "cool bunkum" and "self-righteous piffle." As to Mr. Chamberlain, why be in a hurry to believe the *Daily Telegraph* rather than JOHN BULL?

E. J. P. (Cardiff) asks us to draw attention to the case of Mr. Spry, a clerk to the Cardiff Corporation. He had 245 yards of cable laid, at a cost of £100 of ratepayers' money, so that he might have electric light in his house. There are, however (according to the report) extenuating circumstances. Mr. Spry admits that he acted irregularly; he is prepared to pay interest on the cost of the cable; and he hopes that his neighbours will profit by the cable. Moreover, he is said to be an excellent clerk, who often works overtime gratis. Let us be indulgent at this season.

V. H. (Bristol) took 48 cards from the Pictorial Card Company (62, Middle Abbey Street, Dublin) for sale at 1d. each. They were all misprints, but he got what he could and sent the money to the company. They have now sent him one of their impudent imitation writs, demanding 4s., and costs 1s. 1d. If they issue a real writ, consult us again. Meanwhile, laugh at them and you will probably hear no more.

"CURIOUS" (Ripon).—It would not attract us.

H. F. (Liverpool).—Yes, the coupon combine looks very like a lottery. Have nothing to do with it.

E. J. R. (Shrewsbury).—We will inquire for you at the Admiralty about the missing sailor.

ADVERTISING THAT TELLS.

This latest addition to the well-known G. P. shilling business books tells how to advertise in a small way successfully. Written by a practical, shrewd business man in a style at once clear, concise and forcible. Read what is said about his previous book, "How to do more Business";—

"Very useful."—*The Baker.*

"A capital book."—*The Grocer.*

"Most valuable."—*Northern Whig.*

"Golden hints."—*Grocers' Assistant.*

"Many useful hints."—*British Baker.*

"Brimful of hints."—*British Printer.*

"Practical and helpful."—*Daily Mail.*

"Full of revelations."—*Rapid Review.*

"Full of useful hints."—*The Scotsman.*

"A most useful book."—*Dundee Courier.*

"Valuable hints."—*Universal Provider.*

"A good Shilling's worth."—*The Chemist.*

"Should prove very welcome."—*The Draper.*

Do you desire to become a specialist in business—a man who can develop, direct, and utilize all the talents necessary to build up a modern business?—then read the following books:—

"Advertising that Tells."

"How to do More Business."

"The Art of Typewriting."

"Letters that Bring Business."

"Maclaren's 'Systematic Memory.'"

"What a Business Man Ought to Know."

They will cost you only 6/- the set, or in strong cloth, 9/-. Single copies, 1/- net, in cloth 1/6 net, of all booksellers, or by post from

GUILBERT PITMAN, 80, Byron House, Fleet St., E.C.

A MEDICAL MAN, who does not wish even his initials published, says he always returns bucket-shop circulars in unstamped envelopes. But how does he know the people take them in, when they have failed to take him in?

B. G. (London, N.W.).—There is such a run on our biscuits that we may not be able to spare one for Sir Thomas Brooke-Hitching.

BARON DE R. (Dublin) tells us that the *Freeman's Journal* claims to have commented on the Highbury Mystery before we did; that no doctor could be found to issue satisfactory bulletins about Joe Chamberlain; and that Lord Aberdeen is learning to dance. We hope his Excellency will dance to the right tune when the Irish Bill is introduced next session.

"HERNEHILLITE."—Thanks for suggestions. We should say off-hand that the odds were 15 to 1.

MAJOR G. O. W. (Paignton) argues very effectively that trusts and monopolies are evil; that we created a "money trust" when we restricted the business of banking to those persons only who are in possession of gold; that "the continued use of gold and silver coins is an anachronism and an absurdity"; and that "the true remedy for the money trust is free competition in the manufacture and sale of the tools of exchange"—i.e., money. We think the honourable and gallant gentleman is needlessly alarmed. But he writes very well, and we shall always be glad to hear from him.

B. P. (Hammersmith) wants to know the meaning of the words *Daily Mail*, which appear without comment in every edition of the *Evening News*. He supposes it is a new catchphrase.

R. F. H. S. (London, E.C.) kindly sends us a sample of "Nerve and Flesh Food," which we have given to our cat. R. F. H. S. has analysed the pills sold by the old swindler Pointing, trading as the M.A. Temple Association, for 21s. the set of three packets, and says he can make them for 5s. per 1,000 pills.

H. F. H. (Stroud Green) wants us to take up the hire-furnishing system. He says "a vast number of firms are trading in this extortionate form of money-lending," and he alludes to "the misery of poor folk held in the bondage of debt to these sharks, who stick at nothing to obtain their pound of flesh." Perhaps some of our readers will send us their experiences.

J. M. B. (King's Cross) says our cartoon of Mr. Bell was much admired by his friends.

T. A. B. (Seacombe) says our Salvation Army articles interested some of "General" Booth's officers in a railway car-

riage. He also draws our attention to the "stylish skirt" trick, which we have already exposed.

"DAVID" (Boxhill-on-Sea).—The British Cycle Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering Company (65, Renfield Street, Glasgow), despite its sesquipedalian title, is unknown in the cycle trade.

"TIM BOBBIN" (Pendleton).—We have already warned our readers against Mr. Martin Bull.

W. T. (Langley) says the Brahma Watch Company got his signature from *Sketchy Bits*. Why write to such a paper?

C. H. F. (Birmingham) gives evidence showing that "Peps, the new pine-air treatment," is run by the Bile Beans people. He wonders why the Lord Mayor of Leeds helped to advertise it. So do we.

J. W. (Manchester).—The *Mint* has already been exposed elsewhere.

R. D. (Limavady).—Thanks for your efforts. We have often shown up the bogus pawnbrokers.

H. H. M. (Oundle).—You are quite wrong, but we can't argue the percentage of profits all over again.

G. H. (Mon.).—We are much obliged for cuttings, but surely the British Watch Company has been sufficiently exposed by now.

"OLD BILL" (London).—Thanks for interesting information.

R. G. (Dundee).—Thanks for cuttings, but scarcely suitable.

W. H. W. (Hackney) informs us that the Rev. Mr. Rawlings, of the Unitarian Church, Chatham Place, has recently been taking our Salvation Army criticisms as his text.

H. G. (Norwood).—Hardly up to the mark. Try again later on.

W. B. (Oxford) writes us in reference to the inquisitorial system adopted by the Post Office in regard to the sums collected by postmen in respect of Christmas boxes, with a view to the deduction of the amount from their salaries. We shall be glad to hear more about the matter.

H. (Manchester).—We are really not in a position to advise you as to the wisdom of starting business for yourself. All the same, we appreciate your compliment in seeking our advice.

H. B. (Yarmouth).—More "Prisoners at the Bar" will appear shortly.

B. G. (Sheffield) gives us the unnecessary assurance that all our Sheffield readers are not like that correspondent whose vulgar and impertinent letter we recently published. Thank goodness, we have a large army of respectable and valued readers in "Steelopolis."

(Many replies stand over.)

A BOON TO CITY MEN.

10 Minutes from Rail and Nice Country Town, and 25 miles from London.



FREE DEEDS.

NO LAW COSTS.

NO SURVEY

FEEES.

Good six-room residences as above on a large plot of land, with bath and every modern convenience, for £285. Water laid on. Good roads.

Land from £35 an acre.

POSSESSION ON PAYMENT OF 10%, BALANCE SPREAD OVER 21 YEARS.

Week-end and Holiday Residences for £125.

Write for particulars of above and large illustrated book of estates in 11 different counties, or, if possible, call.

HOMESTEADS LTD., 27, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

RACING NOTES.

By W. LOTINGA.

("Larry Lynx" of "The People.")

Windsor.

I doubt whether it is an advantage for any race executive to hold three two-day meetings within a month. Sportsmen were summoned to Windsor just prior to Christmas, again last week-end, and will foregather there once more, on the 21st and 22nd inst. We frequently find that an executive's dates have been similarly allotted all in a heap.

The Resentment of Fate.

When Capt. Noel Money began racing in England a few weeks ago he experienced typical novices' luck. His horses all won, Cissy's Revel running up a sequence of three successes, including a valuable Sandown Park Steeplechase Handicap. They were all most unluckily disqualified by reason of an absurd technicality, and one over which the popular young sportsman had no control, being unaware of the disqualifying facts. Now, when the technical ban upon his nominations has been removed, the luck has deserted him, and Island Chief was unquestionably terribly unfortunate not to have won Windsor's chief steeplechase. It may be that Bulbo's win will yield consolation, and anyhow later on his plucky purchase of Roseate Dawn can hardly fail to find some reward, if not over hurdles, when flat racing begins.

An Unlucky Claim.

In Savanaka, a big, upstanding, really good-looking horse, Capt. Denny may not have a bargain, although it appeared so when he was able to claim the horse after an unlucky defeat in a Gatwick selling stake. As in the past, Savanaka is an unlucky animal to his owner, as, after making a good race of it with Doggie, the first day at Windsor, he might have beaten Alert III., but for a crushing fall over the last fence the next day. The fact is that he is an awkward horse to ride, particularly for an amateur, as he gets right under his fences, and is apt to hit them hard. Thus, in estimating the value of thoroughbreds, one has to judge by surrounding circumstances as to whether they are in the hands of those who understand their peculiarities and can train them, or whether they will be ridden by professionals or amateurs.

"Maiden" (?) Plates.

Windsor provided the almost universal Maiden Steeplechase, in which Abelard and Robin beat the rest of their field a distance, thereby stultifying the title of the stake. Robin had won a similar event the previous meeting, while this was Abelard's third victory in sequence. How then, by any stretch of imagination, can either of them fairly claim to be maidens, or entitled to compete in stakes under that denomination? True, each was carrying a 5lb. penalty under the conditions as winners after the time of entry, just a month prior to the race's decision. The whole system is ridiculous, and my strongest contention is that any horse winning prior to the race day should not be eligible to compete, for man or horse can only be a novice until *once* successful.

Insufficient Penalty.

I always contend that a 4lb. or 5lb. penalty is insufficient, and we had further evidence on Saturday last at Windsor, when three of the races, including each of the handicaps, fell to horses carrying a nominal 5lb. extra, in Abelard, Timothy Titus, and Lapsang. When a horse is really thoroughly well a few pounds in weight do not matter, and my pet theory is that the handicapper ought to be entitled to penalise a horse right up to the day of the race, according to the value of his immediately preceding win or wins, as in athletics. In each of the three cases named, the horses were justifiably raging favourites; they spoiled the race and frightened the majority of other entrants away.

The Entries.

The Handicap nominations are so much below the average that the disappointment can only be equalled by the surmise as to what the races will eventually pan out into, although the old-time idea of entering everything has long been exploded, and the greater percentage of those put in run if practicable. The last few seasons, however, all our big events, especially early in the year, have gradually shown retrogression in the number of nominations, and this time the drop all round is more keenly accentuated than ever. Strangely enough the sole exception is the Great Metropolitan, which has usually been the worst off, and at times has failed to close altogether. But the one brilliant relief to the just published nominations is the splendid and class entry for the Ascot Gold Cup.

Out of Date.

The reason for the drop in handicap entries is, I think, due to the almost absurd adherence to old-time custom to make the first Tuesday in January Nomination Day. Why should it be, anyhow for events like the Lincoln, City, Jubilee, etc.? We are very prone to hanker after out-of-date customs, but what reasonable ground can there be for demanding entries for races to be run from three to four months subsequently? As regards the publication of the weights, I consider this an even greater cardinal mistake, for one race is bound to spoil another, so that after a horse runs up he not only rules the market, but ruins the next handicap, as it is not likely that many of those who finished behind him previously or have no chance on collateral form, will oppose him. I am always having different, perhaps somewhat extraordinary ideas, but my notion would certainly be to close these races early in March, so that owners could then see nearer the time what horses they really possessed, what condition they were in, and what their reasonable prospects would be. I should then keep back the weights for the City and Suburban until after the running of the Lincoln and the Jubilee until within the day subsequent to the Epsom race.

The Calendar.

Last week-end we were all somewhat surprised, if nothing stronger, by the official bomb in the shape of a very much altered *Calendar*. It included four full pages of miscellaneous advertisements, and represented much more a daily newspaper (especially the *Evening Standard*) than what we are accustomed to regard as the organ of racing pure and simple. That given ideas of such commercialism there is vast resource in the *Calendar* is palpable, and I have for long known an advertising firm who would have been glad to give the authorities £200 per week for the advertisement control of the issue. It is usual regarding these advertisements to let the contract to a business firm at a certain rate, and no doubt this has been done, but we all assume that the main profits accrue to the Jockey Club. Well and good, and mayhap somewhat necessary; yet pretty generally I have heard the alteration (or improvement, if you will) denounced as *infra dig*.

Where's the Difference.

The change, however, evidences one important fact, that the Jockey Club are clearly desirous of gathering funds for the benefit of racing generally. Such is very natural and very advisable, but if they are prone to such extreme commercial undertakings as the acceptance of heterogeneous advertisements (which do not even pertain to racing), why should they resent the oft-made proposition of licensing bookmakers? Here at once is an assured income, twenty-fold what any advertisements can bring in, certainly more becoming their omnipotent position, and, above all, gratifying and satisfying to the whole racing army, be they bookmakers, backers, or onlookers. If one means of income is sought, and especially the minor methods, why not the greater, the more noble? Can there be any reasonable tangible reason why our authorities, obviously anxious to benefit the great national pastime, simply because of old-time tradition, or the barking occasionally of the unscrupulous Nonconformist conscience, refuse to grasp that which EVERYBODY clamours for, that which would give them what they themselves are seeking—enormous revenue? Mine is only a humble, respectful opinion, but I am open to conviction contrary if such be fairly possible.

The Birch Fund.

No improvement has been made, or is possible, in the sad case of poor Birch, whose bodily strength—allied to his youth and original splendid condition—is fiercely battling, but gradually succumbing to death. As far as mundane matters go my Fund has now exceeded four figures. Thanks to the generosity of the racing forces and many readers of JOHN BULL, the figures—at the moment of writing approaching £1,100—are in the main made up of small contributions; there are many, especially those who employed Birch, who have yet to give.

Racing Overdone.

The sport (?) provided last week—the attenuated fields, the same few competitive "crocks"—suggests, nay proves,

BIRKBECK BANK.

ESTABLISHED 1851.
SOUTHAMPTON BUILDINGS, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.
NOTICE is hereby given that the Rate of Interest allowed on Deposits Receipts at seven days' notice of withdrawal is
4 PER CENT. PER ANNUM
until further notice.
PROSPECTUS, with full particulars, POST FREE.

that we have too much racing nowadays. There are insufficient owners and horses, and lack of money to keep the game going adequately and profitably throughout the winter, from Monday to Saturday, almost without a break. Windsor was tame, but the worst sport of last week Gatwick, as usual, served up, and here the market was miserably weak and the attendance but a "handful," so much so that quite a fresh record of all-round poverty was struck. In one luncheon room only four persons were served on the first day. But there are reasons beyond the multiplication of racing fixtures to account for the gradual but sure and very obvious degeneration of Gatwick—in the growing unpopularity of the executive, the resentment by owners and the paying public of Messrs. Pratt and Co.'s high-handed arbitrary methods.

This is justifiable in fact and palpable in effect; hardly a meeting passes without some little contretemps—a few high words with a patron (usually a race horse owner's) public resentment of certain official treatment. I wonder how many owners have, in turn, vowed never to "run a horse at Pratt's meetings again?" Personally, I know of many.

What is the Due of Owners?

As all who know racing realise, owners are very long-suffering. No one is more heavily or more unfairly charged than they—the recognised prey of everybody—as a doubtful compliment to their presumed wealth or (temporary) importance. But even they rail at last at being continuously the traditional "absent-minded beggar," to pay, pay, pay—all give and no take. And no race executive more sternly enforces such procedure than the controllers of Gatwick, Folkestone, Lewes, and Alexandra Park. Within the last year a combine to boycott these meetings was mooted and partially carried into effect by some dozen owners, but racegoers are ever lethargic, and it would hardly be common-sense to bite one's nose off to spite one's face. Thus, it is often policy to run at a certain meeting—to go for a certain race where your horse has a chance—and so little came of the project, which has in the main evaporated. Expressed intentions in the heat of the moment are often not eventually carried into effect. There are always two ways of doing everything—the nice and the nasty. Unfortunately, Messrs. Pratt and Co. adopt the latter—the over-officious, too grasping methods, and employ them towards those who are their patrons, and who really ought to dominate—not be arbitrarily ruled or grudgingly granted their actual rights. Moreover, the spontaneity of an act, the manner of its doing, adds enormously to its value, and in comparison to one's welcome at Lingfield, to the consideration shown universally at, say, Newbury, Hurst Park, or Windsor, the contrast is the more marked and remarkable. These characteristics naturally "stick" in racegoers' minds, with the equally rational result that they decide to eschew the obnoxiously-managed meetings, and they are gradually doing so.

The Difference 'Twixt "Give and Take."

On the other hand, Messrs. Pratt and Co. excel in seeking favours—THEN they are most obsequiously courteous. But let the same much-canvassed, written, or telegraphed-to owner ask for a favour—an admission ticket on a day when he has nothing entered—then he finds the suave-tongued lamb an insulting lion! How many have so discovered to their cost? And how many men possessing annual passes, obtaining occasional free tickets, or the paying public, have suffered, and complained, of the insolent rudeness of some of the gatekeepers at Messrs. Pratt's meetings?

I can speak from personal experience as to the firm's methods in seeking incessant Press notices. Hardly a week passes without a neatly-typed paragraph being sent round "with compliments, for insertion," concerning the "splendid going at Gatwick," "the huge high-class entry at Lewes," "the wonderful inducements held out to owners in rich stakes at Alexandra Park," etc., etc. These statements are not on affidavit, and more frequently than not are utterly falsified in the realisation. They are what are known as "bolstering (trade) ads.," whilst another wheeze is to send out to the Press early on the day of a meeting an attractive list of arrivals to attract the paying public, although many—at times most—of the horses, professedly "on the spot" have never left their training quarters and were never intended to run. But the inclusion of their names has served its purpose, especially if they are "class" horses or top-weights. We all eagerly scan—and half believe in—these "dummy" lists day after day. If they WERE true, what contests we should have meeting after meeting, especially at Messrs. Pratt's gatherings, for the firm are the greatest adepts at such 'cute, if hardly honest, commercialism. Others do it, but Pratts overdo it. What the firm do object to is criticism; their drastic rulings (in vogue nowhere else) as to where you may go and what you may do on their courses are not to be resented in type. The "silver ringites," like the fly of fiction, once inside the enclosure are forbidden exit. Why? And to be

hemmed in like chickens, ruled like schoolboys, they pay, but complain as they may do, they have no voice, and it is not considered proper journalism—in Messrs. Pratt and Co.'s view—to be their spokesman. Similarly, other palpable defects—or public needs—ought not to be commented upon. To be a "perfect Pressman" one should "whitewash" everything. Such has not been—and never will be—my idea, and as the servant of the public I shall always voice my actual experiences—which, in the main, are their experiences—and if a fact, a meeting, or a firm merit denunciation I shall ever have the courage of my own opinions to express fair, if outspoken, and (to those concerned) distasteful criticism. My individuality and the determination to speak fearlessly, and call a spade a spade—has alone been the cause of my journalistic success. If a man is worthy his position, or pay, he must mix in the game, have an opinion, and express it. No withdrawal of the privilege of a press-pass, or threats, will deter me from performing my public duty.

Prophetic.

Winners at small prices is the prospect for Plumpton, where the Windsor successes of LAPSANG and CULLODEN'S DELIGHT seem pretty certain to be repeated under their small penalties. Lapsang only gets a further 3lb. for his easy second victory, the seconds of POETRY, SAVANAKA, and BUMPKIN should also now be atoned for.

CHARLES LEVY,

28, REGENT ST., S.W.

(Business as usual during the winter.)

Telegraphic Address: "FOREJUDGE, LONDON."

Telephones:

3615 GERRARD, 4190 CENTRAL.

Telegraphic Address: "IRISHMAN, LONDON."

Telephone: No. 5072 GERRARD.

E. C. IRISH, OXFORD CLUB,

7, ARGYLL STREET, W.

W. G. MORTIMER,

51, LEXINGTON STREET,

REGENT STREET, W.

Best Terms.

Particulars Free.

Established 1876.

W. H. SAUNDERS:

Telegraphic Address is

"PLASTERING, LONDON."

TRACE AND PERCY,

15, JERMYN ST., LONDON, S.W.

Every description of business undertaken. Advantageous terms post free on Application.

"LARRY LYNN," in the "People," April 1, 1906, attributes our success to straightforwardness and accuracy.

A. HEATHORN,

51, WARWICK STREET, REGENT STREET, W.

Business continued through the winter, as usual.

Accounts opened on approved references.

Telephones: 4171 GERRARD, and 11230 CENTRAL.

Telegraphic Address: Fretting, London.

JOHN ROBERTSON & CO.

TURF ACCOUNTANTS,

FLUSHING, HOLLAND.

Postage 2½d. Postcards, 1d.

The "Winning Post," July 7th, says:—

"A Straightforward Firm of Accountants."

WRITE FOR RULES.

SIBERIA.

Notice to the Shareholders in the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited.

NERCHINSK OPTIONS, LIMITED.

(Incorporated under the Companies Acts 1862 to 1900.)

A Prospectus (which has been filed with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies) is being issued.

The Capital of the Company is £50,000, divided into 50,000 Shares of £1 each, and 40,000 SHARES are being OFFERED for SUBSCRIPTION at PAR, payable as follows:—

2s. 6d. per share on Application; 2s. 6d. per share on Allotment; 5s. per share two months after Allotment; 5s. per share four months after allotment; and 5s. per share six months after allotment.

Shareholders in the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, will receive (rateably according to their applications on this Prospectus) preferential allotment as to one-half of the Shares now offered for subscription.

The Shares may be paid up in full on, or at any time after, allotment, and Share Warrants to bearer will, subject to the provisions of the Articles of Association, be issued if required.

The Prospectus states that the Company has been formed to acquire the grant by the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, of an exclusive licence to prospect and to lease, on terms set out in a Contract dated 7th January, 1907 (being Contract No. 3 below), any Gold Mines which this Company may select, the area of selection covering in the aggregate four square miles in the Mala Koudechi Valley.

That this area is situated in the eastern part of the Nerchinsk mining district of Siberia, in the neighbourhood of the property of the Kluchi Gold Mines, Limited.

The concession held by the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited (the territories covered by and including the above-mentioned area), was granted by the Private Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia, and is held (as altered and amended by a supplementary agreement, which is dated 21st March, 1904, made by the Private Cabinet aforesaid with the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited) by the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, as transferee for a term of twenty-four years from the 1st January, 1904, with the right of renewal for a similar period. Under the concession as altered and amended by the supplementary agreement, the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, has an exclusive gold prospecting licence up to the 1st January, 1908, over the concession area, and the right to call for mining leases of any mines located before the 1st January, 1908, within the free lands comprised in the concession area. The concession and supplementary agreement are subject to the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, performing and observing the stipulations and conditions therein contained, amongst which are the payment by that Company of (a) the gold royalties therein specified, but in no case less than a minimum of £4,000 per annum, and (b) a decastine tax of 3 roubles per decastine of ground occupied and taken on lease.

That the Company will not, according to the terms of the proposed prospecting licence, itself work any of the gold mines which it may select, but must promote separate companies for these purposes in conjunction with the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited.

That prospecting work has already been done by the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, on the area included in the licence to prospect under the superintendence of that Company's consulting engineers, Messrs. Pearse, Kingston and Browne, and that the following is copy Report of Mr. A. L. Pearse on this area, and dated 21st November, 1903, addressed to the Directors of the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited:—

Mala Koudechi Camp is connected with Davenda and Mount Kluchi by a fairly good road, and can be reached from the former in two hours. It has been the headquarters for the prospecting carried out in that district (see plan) and controls the work on the "Growler" lode, the prospects named "Eisenhut," "Twin," "Discovery," "Anvil," and "Divide."

Rich quartz float found above the line of some of the richest placers on the Concession led to these discoveries.

"EISENHUT" LODGE.—The Eisenhut lode was found by costean trench on the west side of the Kostremyka Creek. Its outcrop is 10ft. wide, of grey quartz, and worth half an ounce per ton. A tunnel has been started to endeavour to find this lode below the costean.

"TWIN."—The Twin is an outcrop of quartz 3ft. wide, similar to the Eisenhut, further up the hill. A tunnel is being driven to try and find it in depth.

At the head of the Kostremyka Creek, and opposite to Mala Koudechi, almost on top of the hill or divide, a lode has been discovered named the "Victory," striking N. 75 degrees W., which is being opened on by the two shafts, Discovery and Anvil, situated 300ft. apart.

"DISCOVERY" AND "ANVIL" SHAFTS.—The Discovery Shaft is down 30ft. on the hanging-wall side, and exposes 4ft. of the lode matter. The present value is half an ounce per ton. The lode is nearly vertical. In the "Anvil" shaft the lode has been cross-cut, it is 10ft. wide and worth 12dwts. per ton. The shaft has been started at this cross-cut.

"DIVIDE" SHAFT.—The Divide Shaft is down 23ft. It is situated a quarter of a mile west from the Anvil, and on the same line of strike, but it is questionable if the lode has any connection with the Victory. The formation in this shaft is not well defined, but as it pans well it is worth following.

"GROWLER" LODGE.—The Growler is a lode 3ft. to 7ft. wide, two miles up the stream from Koudechi. A shaft is sunk 30ft. on the hanging-wall. Its direction is N. 30 degrees W. It is a promising looking lode of white quartz, carrying pyrites, chalcopryite, and a little lead. Two assays made of samples from here gave 11dwts. and 5dwts. respectively.

That the Directors have also received the following Report from their Chief Engineer, Mr. H. G. L. Kenrick, M.I.M.M.:—

Worcester House, Walbrook,
London, E.C., January 5th, 1907.

Pearse, Kingston and Browne.

The Directors of NERCHINSK OPTIONS, LIMITED.

Gentlemen,—In answer to your request for an opinion on the large prospecting area you have acquired from the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, I beg to state that towards the end of May, 1903, I went out to Siberia to inspect and report on the Nerchinsk Company's property.

During the six months I was on this property I spent some time in the Kluchi and Koudechi Valleys, and laid out the first works undertaken in these valleys in search of quartz lodes.

The result of these works disclosed the large Kluchi lode, which was found immediately before my return to England. The prospecting work, which was continued by Mr. Harper (the present manager of Kluchi Gold Mines, Limited), has since disclosed several lodes in the Kluchi and Koudechi Valleys.

Very little prospecting work has at present been undertaken on your concession. The work has practically been confined to the sinking of two or three small shafts about 30 ft. in depth, and the drifting of a few costeans. The result of this work must be considered very satisfactory, as the outcrops of four lodes have already been disclosed.

I understand you have a copy of a report made in 1903 by Mr. A. L. Pearse, which covers the work done on these lodes.

The rich placers in the Koudechi Valley have been worked for many years by the Private Cabinet, but no attention was given to quartz mining until the prospecting referred to above was undertaken by the Nerchinsk Company.

A considerable amount of rich float quartz has been found in these valleys, which should indicate that, with a little prospecting, the ore bodies from which it has been shed might be located.

I would strongly recommend that development work should be carried out on the lodes already disclosed, and systematic prospecting be undertaken on this valuable concession, which gives every promise of developing several large mines.

Yours faithfully,

H. G. L. KENRICK.

That, taking into account the result of the work already done, it is anticipated that by the further expenditure provided for by this Company, several mining propositions should be located suitable for formation into separate companies, and the benefit of flotation of these will accrue to this Company and the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, as after providing out of the total capitalisation of each separate Company one third thereof for the working capital and formation expenses of each such Company, the balance will be divided as to one-half to this Company and one-half to the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited.

A Sketch Map, showing the approximate position, etc., of the Mala Koudechi property, referred to in the report, is enclosed with the prospectus. The purchase consideration payable to the N.P. Syndicate, of 63, London Wall, London, E.C., and the terms and conditions relating thereto, together with the various contracts and all other information required by the Companies Acts, are fully set out in the prospectus.

The Company will pay a brokerage of 6d. per Share on all Shares allotted on Application Forms bearing brokers' stamps.

The DIRECTORS are:—Viscount FRANKFORT DE MONTMORENCY, 56, Warwick Square, London, S.W.; E. MEREWETHER BOVILL, Norcott Court, Berkhamstead (Director of the Kluchi Gold Mines, Limited, and of the Peel River Land and Minerals Company, Limited); Lieut.-Colonel GEORGE HARGREAVE, 18, Marlborough Road, West Kensington, London, W.; LEO RAFFALOVICH, of 24, Palace Quay, St. Petersburg, and 23, Leinster Terrace, London, W. (Director of the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, and of the Kluchi Gold Mines, Limited).

The Bankers are Parr's Bank, Limited, 77, Lombard Street, London, E.C., and Branches. The Solicitors are Steadman, Van Praagh and Gaylor, 4, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall East, London, S.W. The Broker is Wilfrid Stephenson, Gresham House, Old Broad Street, London, E.C. The Auditors are Hudson, Smith, Briggs, Smith and Taylor, 23, College Hill, London, E.C., and Exchange, Bristol. The Consulting Engineers are Pearse, Kingston and Browne, Worcester House, Walbrook, London, E.C. The Chief Engineer in Siberia will be H. G. L. Kenrick, M.I.M.M. The Secretaries are Steele, Lockhart and Co., and the Registered Office is 63, London Wall, London, E.C.

Applications for Shares should be made on the form accompanying the prospectus, and forwarded to the Company's Bankers, together with a remittance for the amount payable on application.

This notice is not published as an invitation to apply for shares, but merely as a notification to shareholders in the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, that a prospectus of the Nerchinsk Options, Limited, is being issued, and that Prospectuses and Forms of Application can be obtained at the Offices of the Company and of the Bankers, Brokers, and Solicitors. The List of Applications will close on Thursday, the 10th January, 1907, at 4 p.m.

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